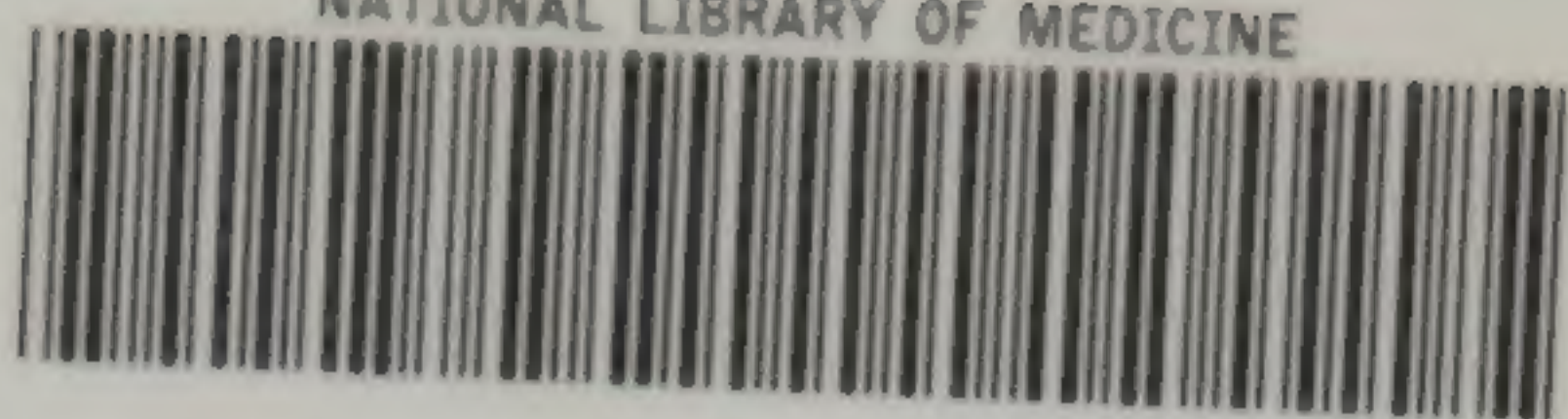






NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MEDICINE



NLM 00555638 5

B18-8-1

SURGEON GENERAL'S OFFICE

LIBRARY.

ANNEX

Section, -----

No. 163349











# TALKS TO MY PATIENTS

HINTS ON GETTING WELL

AND KEEPING WELL

---

*New Edition Enlarged with the addition of Nine-  
teen "Letters to Ladies" on Health,  
Education, Society, etc.*

---

BY

RACHEL B. GLEASON, M. D.

LIBRARY  
SURGEON GENERAL'S OFFICE

SEP. 19. 1898

163349

M. L. HOLBROOK CO.

46 EAST 21ST STREET,  
NEW YORK.

L. N. FOWLER & CO.

7 IMPERIAL ARCADE, LUDGATE CIRCUS,  
LONDON, E. C.

1895.



WP

G554t

1895

**COPYRIGHT BY  
RACHEL B. GLEASON.  
1895**

*Entered at Stationers' Hall, London.*



**To My former Patients,**

**With many Grateful Memories of their Loving Confidence  
and Generous Appreciation,**

**This Book is Affectionately Inscribed, by**

**THE AUTHOR.**







## INTRODUCTION.

---

MANY of my patients have requested me to put my "Parlor Talks" in print, that they might have them for home reference. Often young wives and mothers, who have been under my care during girlhood, have asked me where they could find a book which contained, in substance, what I had given in my informal lectures, adding, "I am sorry I did not take notes of them; but, *then*, the need of much that you said seemed far away; now it is near, and I have no one at hand to give me the advice, no work to consult in reference to these matters of delicacy."

Letters from the extreme East and the far West have come to me, asking for a book or some advice which should help them to understand and meet the infirmities and functions peculiar to womanhood. Hence, in this age of books, when so many are printed that will never be read, and so many more that ought not to be, I have at last concluded to add one to the number, hoping it will not belong to the latter class, though it may be numbered among the former.

I do not write for the public, or "the profession," but



for those friends who want Hydropathic and Hygienic hints to help them meet their home duties.

The book is not intended to do away with doctors, but to aid the young wife when there is no experienced mother or intelligent nurse at hand; to advise in emergencies, or to guide in those matters of delicacy with which woman's life is so replete. The best physicians often feel the lack of some one able to note symptoms, vary treatment, and guide when they are not with the patient. In short, good nursing is the better part of doctoring; indeed, often supersedes the need of a physician.

So this is not a medical book, not a learned book, not a show of science, but I trust not *unscientific*. It will savor little of the library, more of every-day life. A simple compend of such motherly hints as seem to be needed, and such as, from my long care of the sick, I have found available.

The book will offer no new theory as to the cause or cure of diseases, but merely practical suggestions how to relieve pain, or, better still, to avoid it; such means as we have for many years found efficient in our infirmary.

As I write, scores of faces with whom I have grown familiar in the public parlor and private office, or in the sick room, come up before me, and to them I commend this little book.

R. B. G.

ELMIRA SANITARIUM.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS.

---

DEDICATION.....	3
INTRODUCTION.....	5

### GROWING GIRLS.

The Development of Womanhood.....	13
Overwork and Invalidism.....	14
Good Blood Necessary for Good Work.....	15
Precocity Should be Held in Check.....	15
Lost Mental Power.....	16
Lost Physical Power.....	17
The Moral Force.....	17
Gymnastics for Overworked Students.....	18
Piano-Playing.....	19
The Season of Changes.....	19
A Note of Warning to Mothers.....	20
Religious Nature.....	21

### MENSTRUATION.

Commencement and Duration of the Menses.....	23
Premature Development.....	23
Girls at Puberty.....	24
Dangers of Ignorance of the Menses.....	24
Over-Exertion Causes Immaturity.....	25
Treatment.....	27
Causes of Derangement.....	28



## AMENORRHEA.

Its Peculiarities and its Remedies.....	29
Exercise .....	30

## MENORRHAGIA.

Its Character .....	32
Symptoms .....	33
Causes .....	34
Treatment.....	36

## DYSMENORRHEA.

Causes and Cure.....	38
Permanent Dysmenorrhea.....	38
Treatment.....	39
A Caution.....	40

## PROLAPSUS UTERI.

Its Peculiarities.....	42
Imaginary Prolapsus.....	43
Supporters, etc.....	45
Causes .....	47
Treatment.....	50

## LEUCORRHEA.

Its Character .....	52
Location of the Disease.....	53
Causes .....	54
Means of Cure.....	56

## PREGNANCY.

Indications of.....	59
Stomach Troubles.....	60
"Longings".....	61
Remedies for Stomach Troubles.....	62



---

Palliative Treatment during the Early Months.....	63
Exercise.....	64
Nervous Susceptibility.....	66
Inheritance.....	67
Discomforts of Advanced Pregnancy.....	71
Care of the Breasts before Confinement.....	73

### APPROACHING CONFINEMENT.

Premonitory Symptoms.....	76
Preparation.....	79

### DELIVERY.

General Remarks.....	81
Attention to the Infant.....	84
Removal of the After-Birth.....	85
Uterine Hemorrhage.....	86

### AFTER DELIVERY.

After-Pains.....	90
Diet.....	91

### CARE OF THE BREASTS.

Abscess.....	93
Care of the Nipples.....	95

### AFTER CONFINEMENT.

Remarks.....	97
Hemorrhoids.....	98
Local Inflammation.....	100
Tonic Treatment.....	101
How Long the Patient must Lie in Bed.....	101
Importance of Quiet after Confinement.....	105

### BATHING OF BABIES.

General Directions.....	108
-------------------------	-----



## DRESS OF INFANTS.

Remarks .....	112
Tight Dressing.....	113
Our Fashion.....	115

## NURSING.

Regularity as to Time of Nursing .....	119
Caution to Nursing Mothers.....	120

## WEANING.

General Directions .....	123
--------------------------	-----

## FEEDING OF INFANTS.

Remarks .....	126
Wet-Nurses .....	128
Foundling Hospitals.....	128
Kinds of Food.....	130

## INFANTINE DISEASES.

Water Treatment .....	133
Other Treatment.....	136

## DISEASES OF CHILDREN.

Teething.....	139
Affections of the Throat and Chest.....	140
Eruptive Fever .....	141
Diseases of the Skin.....	142

## CHILDREN'S DRESS.

General Directions.....	143
-------------------------	-----

## CONFIDENTIAL TO MOTHERS.

Remarks .....	149
How to Teach the Young.....	152



---

## INTENTIONAL ABORTION.

General Remarks .....	158
-----------------------	-----

## ACCIDENTAL ABORTION.

Preventives .....	164
Care during an Abortion.....	165
Relative Dangers of the Two Classes.....	167

## STERILITY.

Habit.....	170
Local Causes.....	171
General Condition.....	172

## NERVOUS DERANGEMENTS.

Causes.....	175
Peculiarities .....	176
Help Imparted by Another.....	178
Hysteria .....	178
Mode of Life .....	179

## SLEEP.

Sleep Physiologically Considered .....	182
Influence of Habit .....	183
Influence of Sleep on the Senses.....	186
Dreams.....	188
Sleep Affected by Occupation.....	189
Mothers Worn with Night Care.....	191
Growing Children.....	192
Phases of Sleep.....	193
Lack of Sleep a Cause of Mental Derangement.....	194
Effects of Night Work .....	195
Failure of Health from Insufficient Sleep .....	197
Hints to the Sleepless.....	200



## INDIGESTION.

What Shall We Eat? . . . . .	203
Causes of Dyspepsia . . . . .	205
Treatment . . . . .	208

## CONSTIPATION.

Results of Continued Constipation . . . . .	210
---	-----

## MENOPAUSE, OR CHANGE OF LIFE.

Growing Old Gracefully . . . . .	216
Precautions . . . . .	217
Varied Phases of Cessation . . . . .	219
Treatment During Menopause . . . . .	219
Subsequent Discomforts . . . . .	221
Palliative Treatment . . . . .	222
Advancing Years . . . . .	224

## LETTERS TO LADIES.

I—Little 'Things Which Affect the Health . . . . .	229
II—Lack of Muscular Development . . . . .	236
III—The Evils of Working Under Protest . . . . .	247
IV—Evils of the Multiplicity of Domestic Cares . . . . .	255
V—The Culinary Department; Curtailing its Labors . . . . .	263
VI—Let Us Take Needful Rest . . . . .	275
VII—Some Thoughts on Society and Social Life . . . . .	287
VIII—Some of the Trials of Married Life . . . . .	298
IX—Suggestions for Brightening Shadowed Homes . . . . .	308
X—Work for Women—Orphan Children . . . . .	317
XI—Adopting Children . . . . .	328
XII—The Effects of Tight Corsets and Dressing . . . . .	337
XIII—Some Faults of School Girls . . . . .	345
XIV—Over Intellectual Development of School Girls . . . . .	352
XV—Hygiene of the Eyes . . . . .	360
XVI—Ready for What? . . . . .	365
XVII—Medicine, Hygiene and Nursing as Professions . . . . .	377
XVIII—A Letter to Husbands . . . . .	386
XIX—Health Hints for Old People . . . . .	396



# TALKS TO MY PATIENTS.

---

## GROWING GIRLS.

---

WHETHER budding beauty in this age is being blighted more by ignorance or over-indulgence on the part of the parents, it is difficult to decide. But of this I am sure, that many of the fairest buds are to blossom early, die early, or, worse still, live in misery for the want of good motherly guidance, while passing from girlhood to womanhood. During this period the foundation for health and happiness, or sickness and sorrow, is usually firmly laid.

In this chapter I shall dwell on matters seemingly small, but life-long in their results.

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF WOMANHOOD.

When the slight little girl, so boyish in build, takes on as if by magic the size and shape of womanhood, we may know that a new power is being born, new thoughts and new emotions being enkindled.



The development of chest and pelvis show that her physical and mental nature is being matured.

It takes much blood, bone, and muscle to effect all these rapid changes; hence she needs nourishing food, moderate exercise, and freedom from mental excitement.

Growing girls are proverbially weak and sensitive, and continue thus for a time, even after they have attained their full growth, for they are in their plump, juicy stage, not yet consolidated, and hence lack that firmness of fiber which gives power of endurance to body and brain.

#### OVERWORK AND INVALIDISM.

Being large, they look strong, and are often overtaxed, and seldom recover from the effects of overwork at this age.

Mental application also, close and long-continued, results often in invalidism. The bright young miss, quick to learn, eats little, sleeps lightly, grows nervous and sensitive, and with sallow skin and morbid appetite is considered bilious and dosed accordingly, when the great trouble really is nervous exhaustion.

How can she live on pickles and preserves, cakes and candies, chalk and slate pencils, and learn ancient and modern languages, mathematics and natural sciences, and the round of ornamental arts beside?

Out of such an incoherent compound, a character consistent and comfortable can never be made, even with the combined efforts of D. D.s, M. D.s, and learned Profs.



---

GOOD BLOOD NECESSARY FOR GOOD WORK.

In the first place, good blood is necessary to make even a good head do good work. Now, no human "digester" can make good nutrition out of the material above mentioned. Nothing short of an ostrich can comfortably dispose of it.

As to the studies, they are all good, if the student has time, taste, and strength to understand them, but most of them are "strong meat," and need a mature mind in a mature body to master them well.

Of course, a smattering-like parrot talk may be memorized, but a clear, abiding sense can not be gained early on these subjects. It is half comprehended and soon forgotten. The result of this is that the body, being impoverished by imperfect nutrition, and overtaxed by mental work, the mind and muscle usually fail together. Sometimes the physical asserts its rights and keeps the body in good condition, while the mind fails, and so good health and poor scholarship are the results. We have all wondered that so many bright girls turn out positively dull and uninteresting, even before they are twenty years old. I have seen many who bore the mental mark of being dwarfed in mind just as distinctly as others in body. We can see that at twelve, fifteen, or eighteen years of age, they cease to grow head-wise and sometimes heart-wise.

## PRECOCITY SHOULD BE HELD IN CHECK.

While in a public school, one day, we observed a



little girl on tip-toe doing difficult examples on the black-board very promptly. We noticed a bright eye, busy head, and very small limbs. While talking with the principal of the school we said to him that a child with such small calf of the legs ought not to do such large sums, and inquired what he knew of her family. He said that older sisters of this girl had been in his school for years; that, like her, they were bright and promised wonders at first, but all grew dull and fell below mediocrity in mind, after a few years.

Now these precocious ones should be held in check, mentally, and encouraged in that mode of life which develops the muscular. Just as plants, which grow so rank in one direction that they lack symmetry, we prune them that they may send their juices or vegetable blood in the directions most needed, so, instead of pushing these mental prodigies, we should try to guide their life-current in the direction of bodily growth.

#### LOST MENTAL POWER.

Overtaxed mental forces often become permanently exhausted, and life-long dullness is the result. Among this latter class, we have in mind one of great scholarly promise in her childhood, who was the pride and joy of her parents. They had great pleasure in giving her the best of educational advantages, and she went on wonderfully well for a while, and then grew, at times, strange and dreamy. This condition has increased, until now she can not be trusted with even the simplest business responsibilities, and her



---

conversation is confined to the most ordinary round of topics. She now nears her thirtieth year, and though a woman of good size and good health apparently, yet she has less ability in any direction than most children at ten. Sometimes there is a seeming divorce of the physical and intellectual powers: the former going on well, the latter going out or their growth suspended.

#### LOST PHYSICAL POWER.

In others, the mental burns more and more brilliantly, and the body dies or falls into incurable invalidism. Our modern excellent educational advantages furnish specimens of both classes, but mostly of the latter.

How often we hear that "a last year's graduate," or "the first head scholar," has fallen sick of some ordinary acute disease which has proved fatal, simply because the long course of study had so enfeebled the system that it had little power to resist disease or sufficient recuperative force to rally even from slight sickness.

Perhaps a severe cold sends her off with "quick consumption," and every body wonders that "such a healthy girl should go so rapidly!"

#### THE MORAL FORCE.

Many more finish their school course with just life enough left to live, but not enough to use to any purpose the knowledge they have acquired, and so, instead of *bearing* burdens, they have to be held up the rest of their days. They have neither mental nor muscular force enough



to grapple with life's labors, and as for the moral force, it is expended more in ideas or emotions than in any distinct grappling with the wants of this "sin-stricken world."

How often we hear persons say, "My wrist," or "my ankle," or "my back is weak from overwork!" We can say the same of many a mind: it was over-strained, and never recovered its lost power.

#### GYMNASTICS FOR OVERWORKED STUDENTS.

The introduction of Gymnastics, good and graceful as they are in the work of physical culture, must fall short of their full advantages, when the pupils are pressed too hard in their studies.

We can not eat a cake and have it, too. We can not use up all our life-force in mental work, and have it for muscular action. Scholars over-burdened with book work seem languid, lazy even, because the life-force, which goes from brain to body, is so exhausted that muscular inspiration is lacking.

If we wish students to enter with spirit and profit into physical exercise, they must not be exhausted by study, for exercise does not create nerve-power, but exhausts it in such a way as to improve appetite, digestion, and assimilation, and replenishes the fountain, just as the steam-engine must use part of its force to supply itself with water, out of which to make steam. So, we must use some of our nerve-power to supply mere bodily wants, or we shall have no steam with which to do our thinking.



## PIANO-PLAYING.

Piano-playing seems to exhaust nerve-power very rapidly, in proportion to the time expended. Dimness of vision, bad sensations in the head, numbness of fingers, all show exhaustion of electric force. Sometimes partial paralysis, sometimes involuntary action of the muscles (called Chorea or St. Vitus's Dance, when the motions are more satanic than saint-like), is the result of much practice at the piano, with girls from twelve to twenty years of age. When confined to it earlier than this the body fails to develop, and the little girl keeps little longer than she ought; with a flat chest and undeveloped form she enters her teens looking like a little old lady, poor and sallow. Such withered specimens need baths, bread and beef, mental rest and moderate exercise, and they will then mature bodily.

## THE SEASON OF CHANGES.

Near the "second full seven years" there is a rush of new thoughts, new emotions, new hopes, and new desires. Hence it is important that every young miss has some confidante and counselor older and wiser than herself. For lack of this she is often led astray, in spirit, if not in body.

Many a young miss forms an attachment which ends in a miserable marriage, or renders her miserable without marriage. Many a wretched wife has said, "I had no one to advise me when I most needed it. When I would have taken counsel of my mother, she repelled me; hence I



thought she had no loving sympathy, and I rushed to that which I fancied would give me help, but have found it only a broken reed."

Others, too loyal to marry without their parents' approval, have nursed a secret love which has proved a life-long sorrow. Had there been a free conference, so that the genuine love had been comprehended by the parents, they would perhaps have given consent, or at least have shown such consideration for their daughter's welfare as would have led to an appreciative sympathy, and perchance have satisfied her that her affections were misplaced.

#### A NOTE OF WARNING TO MOTHERS.

I have seen many young ladies broken in health by some secret sorrow, began when they were entering their teens, whose friends had little idea that the daughter's disease was at first mental rather than physical, and now both. The mother thought it was some foolish fondness, which her sharp words or ridicule dispelled at the time; but, though the young lips were silenced, the new emotion lived all the stronger, buried from human eye and ear.

I have had frequent occasion to say to young ladies, "This pain in the back of the head and neck, this sensitiveness of spine, this nervous cough, these hysterical spasms, are induced and perpetuated by a morbid emotional life. You have some chronic heartache, some sorrow not well borne, which is the cause of your disease." Upon this come confessions, which, were they written, would make a large book.



---

I give this as a note of warning to mothers to encourage the confidence of their daughters. When they were small, did they not confide in you? but, somehow, as they neared the age when they most needed counsel and comfort, you began to grow apart. If you wish your girls to trust you, you must trust in them. Confidence, to be complete, must be mutual.

Talk with them of your early life, and your early love, that they may realize that you were once young, and had temptations and emotions akin to theirs.

#### RELIGIOUS NATURE.

The age of which we are speaking is one in which the religious nature is often tried and tempted. The little girl whose loving trust in Jesus has made her indeed a home missionary, now begins to reason, to question—to doubt, perchance.

All this is a necessary element of her growth. When she has passed the crisis she will stand all the stronger, for she will find there is no rest save in the Gospel, and in her skepticism she will miss her Lord and say, “To whom shall I go?”

When this religious unrest comes, do not denounce your daughter as a backslider, a heretic, but deal with her tenderly, remembering that Jesus said to Peter, even after he had been long a loving disciple, “Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have thee, that he may sift thee as wheat.” So our lambs will, as they grow up, be tempted to wander from the Good Shepherd and, perchance, deny him; then



weep bitterly, and soon thereafter grow strong in the Lord. During this transition stage it is impossible for us to decide whereunto they may grow. We can only steady and help to guide them aright, but we can not hold them in all things to our own views and opinions.



## MENSTRUATION.

---

### COMMENCEMENT AND DURATION OF THE MENSES.

WE will now consider that function peculiar to women which we call Menses, Menstruation, Catamenia, being unwell, etc. Perhaps the first term, *menses*, being the Latin for months, is as suggestive and as free from objection as any word we can use to signify that periodical flow which occurs about every twenty-eight days, and continues from one to ten days, according to state of health and constitutional peculiarities. From three to five days is the usual time of duration for those in good health. It commences most frequently about the fourteenth year, though we have seen cases where menstruation commenced at ten, others at twenty, and one at thirty years.

### PREMATURE DEVELOPMENT.

Warm climates, stimulating drinks, social excitement early in life, much reading of highly-colored fiction (commonly called "love stories"), are all calculated to bring on this function prematurely.

When childhood is thus shortened, both girlhood and womanhood are more likely to be visited with debility and



disease. The period from twelve to sixteen is an important one for every girl. In a few months after they pass through great changes in their physical, mental, and moral natures.

#### GIRLS AT PUBERTY.

Girls are shy of mentioning symptoms at this age, and consequently do not speak of a pain in the back, aching of limbs, and such discomforts. I have had several cases of serious trouble with the breasts of young mothers, from their being unduly compressed when they were enlarging. They remembered well the time, but were ashamed to say their dresses were too tight across the chest.

The menses, coming on sooner than the mother suspects, is sometimes concealed from her knowledge, and the young miss just here begins a life-long trouble from the want of proper care. I have had many a patient who said she was a healthy, happy child before puberty, but not having properly passed that period, her whole system seemed disturbed and good health had never since been fully established.

#### DANGERS OF IGNORANCE OF THE MENSES.

Some, having been ignorant of this function until it appeared, supposed that something strange had happened to them, of which they were ashamed, and took special care not to have it known, washing their persons and clothing in cold water, and putting the latter on wet, lest a call for clean clothing should expose their condition.



One said she had heard mysterious hints about "bad girls," but did not know what it meant, and feared she was one when this strange flow began; so she waded into a brook, and wore wet linen until the flow ceased. Then suppression ensued, and continued for some years. At thirty years of age she came under my care, when she was a seriously nervous invalid, in consequence of a chronic uterine disease.

Mothers often intend to give the desired information when needed, but never before, and consequently fail to be in season; for children, in more ways than one, advance faster than they anticipate.

OVER-EXERTION CAUSES IMMATURITY.

We especially need to see that the physical, mental, or emotional nature of young girls is not overtaxed; for the straining of either may deter the maturity of their bodies so as to delay the menses beyond its normal period, or to induce suppression, when once this function has been established. In either case, the young miss will be quite pale, sensitive, and suffer loss of appetite, loss of spirit, etc.

A poor girl, aged sixteen, came under my care last year, who had been employed at work too heavy for her; she had been kept up by the use of strong green tea three times a day, and a drink of brandy from the lady of the house on Monday to help her through the washing. Eating very little, and living on the stimulus of the tea, she at



last gave out and "took to bed," at which time she first came under my care.

There was not a shade of color in either her face or lip; the pulse beat one hundred and eighty a minute, instead of eighty, as it should have done; the extremities were cold; she had no appetite; her bowels were constipated, and her menses, which was once regular, had now been suppressed for several months.

Was she sick because she did not menstruate? No, the reverse of this, rather. She was too much impoverished, too bloodless to have any power to perfect and carry on the function peculiar to womanhood. Here, we think, is where many anxious mothers and injudicious nurses make a great mistake in using all manner of "forcing remedies," as they call them, or *emmenagogues*, as the doctors term them, to bring about the monthly tribute when the system has nothing to spare. If by exciting treatment the organs are spurred on to activity, so that the flow is induced, it will do harm rather than good.

This is especially one of Nature's own operations, and the less we interfere with it the better. Our business is only to watch over the general health, and to let Dame Nature attend to these delicate duties in her own time and way, save in cases of organic obstructions, which are so very rare that we will not dwell upon them in this place.



TREATMENT.

“ Well, what did you do with the poor girl, and what was the result ?” you ask. We gave her warm shallow baths ; that is, she sat up, with limbs extended, in water at one hundred and five degrees, from five to ten minutes, as her strength would bear ; then the bath was reduced to ninety degrees, and the patient washed off.

As she grew stronger, she had pours at eighty-five degrees and seventy-five degrees, after the hot baths ; also a daily sitz bath at eighty degrees, five minutes, with hot foot bath at same time, and back washed down.

Her diet consisted of bread, beef, vegetables, soup, and fruits.

As soon as she was able, she took moderate exercise, and kept her person warm, with wrappers and stockings of wool.

Her face, which was one of the sickest and one of the saddest I ever saw at “ sweet sixteen,” grew bright and cheerful, her flesh and color returned ; but months went by before her menses reappeared, which were but very scanty at first

In all cases where strength has been reduced by severe disease, or severe labor, it is usually several months, sometimes a year, before this function is reëstablished. If the general health is improving, we need feel no anxiety as to the result.

Women talk about suppression terminating in consumption, but it is, rather, depraved digestion and diseased lungs



which induce the suppression. The latter is more the result than the cause.

We all pity the poor girl whom want obliged to work, and whose mistress, through thoughtlessness or selfishness, kept her at work on tea and brandy, and who at last turned her out to the tender mercies of the poormaster, but who, fortunately, fell into the hands of the city missionary; but what shall we say, how shall we feel toward those dear daughters of devoted mothers who are going on the same road to serious invalidism; led there by money, instead of the lack of it?

#### CAUSES OF DERANGEMENT.

Children's parties, with little beaux, late hours, thin dresses, rich suppers, all combine to invite sickness, quite as severe and more difficult to cure than that of the poor girl above mentioned.

Or, among the sober class, we find exemplary girls, good scholars, the pride of teachers and the joy of their parents, who eat little breakfast, no dinner, and study hard all day, and dream they are doing their duty.

Both classes are likely to suffer from menstrual derangements, usually suppression, though sometimes the opposite condition appears; periods too profuse and prolonged; the blood being poor, a hemorrhagic tendency is induced.



## AMENORRHEA.

---

### ITS PECULIARITIES AND ITS REMEDIES.

THUS far we have dwelt upon Amenorrhea, or want of menstruation, coming from lack of good blood-making power, or where it was all expended in other directions; but there are some cases which seem to occur from inactivity of the uterine organs, and *not* from general exhaustion of the system. Those of this type will be readily distinguished from the other class, in that there will be a full habit of body, a flushed face, full pulse, pressure of blood to the head, etc. In such cases we should try to equalize the circulation, invite the blood to the hips and extremities by active exercise and derivative baths. House-work is good; also brisk walks and horseback riding. Avoid much as possible hot rooms and sedentary employment. If the extremities are cold, give hot sitz and hot foot baths, ten minutes, with a cold dash or pour after. If the limbs are warm, and there is still a pressure of blood to the head, give a sitz bath of twenty or thirty minutes duration, at eighty-five degrees, and reduce the temperature to seventy-five degrees while in the bath.

These are strongly derivative, and relieve the head more than any other bath, where the warmth of body and reactive



power are sufficient. In cases of this kind there is usually constipation of the bowels; and coarse bread, fruit, and vegetables are the best food. The baths and exercises above-mentioned tend also to increase the activity of the bowels.

#### EXERCISE.

Young ladies at boarding-schools, who feel oppressed because of suppression, sometimes crawl down stairs head-foremost, and say it is quite a sure remedy. Without crinoline, and with wrappers drawn closely about them, they go down one after another, like a string of eels.

The good laugh, the vigorous exercise necessary to properly accomplish such a feat, so quickens the circulation that it is likely to prove an efficient emmenagogue, though we should greatly prefer running up and down hill, for various reasons. But this ludicrous remedy throws light as to the real needs of pent-up school girls, where often the proprieties of the place put out all physical life, and the depravity of the flesh and spirit develop more rapidly, often, than the mental or moral graces.

Many of our "Schools for Young Ladies" are recognizing this need of exercise, and are making generous provisions for it, but they fall short, in many cases, of being really advantageous, because the course of study is so extensive that it leaves neither time nor strength for muscular development. Our growing girls can't learn "every thing and more too," and keep in good health beside.

There are cases of amenorrhea, though rare, where the



---

whole system is surcharged with blood; even the uterus is congested, and still the menses are scanty, tardy, or entirely suppressed. Such we have found greatly benefited by local depletion. The organ thus relieved resumes its normal monthly secretion. But as this class needs the advice of a physician of experience, and sometimes the aid of the surgeon, we will not dwell on the ways or means of treatment.



## MENORRHAGIA.

---

### CHARACTER.

WHEN the monthly tribute is excessive we call it Menorrhagia, or profuse menstruation. It may occur too frequently, be too prolonged, or be right as to time but excessive in amount. Whatever phase this excess may take, it enfeebles the back, blanches the cheek, makes the nervous system over-sensitive, and visits the subject with varied symptoms of muscular and nervous debility.

But you ask, What is the right time, and what is the right amount?

We can not make an exact rule for either, as both vary with different constitutions. The usual habit with those in good health is twenty-eight days from the beginning of one period to the beginning of the next, though some count twenty-eight days from the close of one to the commencement of the next. Hence our term, menses, and hence the old notion that the moon had its influence on this periodical flow, as well as on the weaning of babies, the sowing of onions, salting of pork, etc.

But as we do not know how the changes of the moon can affect this function, and as we are certain that changes



---

under our own control do modify it, we will confine our remarks to the latter point.

As to the length of time, it ranges from two to five days among those in good health. Three days we deem about the average. As to quantity, we can give no exact rule; it varies with individuals; what is a normal amount for one may be excessive for another. Still there are symptoms which decide the question.

#### SYMPTOMS.

For instance, after the period is passed, if you feel lighter, brighter, and better in every respect, you may be quite sure the function has been correctly performed.

If, on the contrary, you are weak in the back, eyes sensitive to light, with a general feeling of exhaustion, you may be quite certain it has been excessive. This form of menstrual derangement is much more common than formerly, judging from the testimony of old ladies and older authors. The latter speak of it as peculiar to women worn with over-work, frequent child-bearing, prolonged nursing, etc., and not as common to girls.

Such is the delicacy of the young miss in speaking of these matters, that modern authors and modern doctors, for the most part, have little idea that this excessive drain has become such a general source of debility.

The detail of symptoms is not sufficiently definite, so that the physician gets an idea of the amount of vital fluid lost every twenty-eight days, or oftener. Mothers often fail to give the proper supervision on this point, sometimes from



lack of knowledge, and often for want of confidential freedom between themselves and their daughters on matters of delicacy. We have seen many, very many cases among girls where the flow returned at intervals of only two or three weeks, and continued from five to ten days even.

#### CAUSES.

Now to the question, Why is this menstrual derangement so much more prevalent with the young now than forty or fifty years ago?

Among the old wives' notions is this: that the wearing of napkins has induced this tendency to excessive flow; that, as girls grew fastidious and over-nice, they "took to them;" that formerly they were never worn.

I have seen many persons who were very positive on this point, but it seems to me they have mistaken the condition for the cause. The flow was so slight among these hardy women of earlier days that they could dispense with the guard, which is now indispensable. The same is true of Indian women.

To my mind there are many causes which commend themselves to the judgment, much more than those above mentioned.

First, our girls lack that bodily exercise which quickens the flow of blood through the extremities; hence the working muscles, or those which should work, lack a supply, and the excess goes to some of the internal organs, often the uterus. The capillary circulation is weak in the extremities of those who have insufficient exercise.



---

Again, our style of dress for many years has been such as to bring too much weight and heat over the back and hips, and thus invites a turgescence of blood to the pelvis. Compression, too, about the waist hinders the returning circulation, and makes pelvic congestions, just as a tight *axia* size makes a purple hand.

Crinoline and open sleeves in cold weather, without under dressing of warm flannel, renders the circulation imperfect, and drives the blood to the internal organs.

Some of the worst cases of menorrhagia I have known have been where a severe cold at the sensitive period has induced hemorrhage, which returned with each month.

From observation I should judge that colds quite as often induce this derangement as suppression, though the latter, being more alarming, is more frequently reported promptly to the medical adviser, in the fear of congestion of brain or lungs.

Menorrhagia comes under the physician's care when the case has become chronic, and the debility induced alarms the friends. Hence many such have come under our care. Late hours, hot drinks, exciting books, and social gayety are very likely to induce this trouble in young and sensitive girls, for the reason that the emotional life is too intense and induces congestive fullness of the uterus.

Besides the causes above mentioned, there is often some disease of this organ which requires special treatment to effect a cure. This will furnish the topic of another paper.



## TREATMENT.

Water treatment is especially beneficial in all cases of uterine flooding, from whatever cause. Sitz baths, cool as can be borne without after chilliness, of from five to ten minutes duration, twice per day, beginning at eighty-five degrees and reducing the temperature from week to week to sixty-five degrees, are very useful.

If the feet are cold, take a hot foot bath at the time of taking the cool sitz, and keep the head cool with a wet compress.

Vaginal injections, taken while in the sitz bath, and an enema for the bowels of half a pint of cool water, to be retained as one lies down, are valuable where there is a tendency to flooding.

A girdle, made of two thicknesses of linen (not very heavy), about one-third of a yard wide and long enough to pin about the hips and around over the abdomen, wet, with two thicknesses of heavy dry cotton over it, and all fitted comfortably over the hips and pinned over the stomach and bowels, will, if changed as often as it gets warm and dry, keep down the tendency to heat in the pelvic region, and be very grateful to the patient. In the absence of nicely-fitting girdles, towels, one wet and the other dry, may be substituted, and worn in comfort.

When the monthly period commences it is usually safe to take sitz baths, the first day at ninety-five degrees; the second day at ninety degrees; the third day at eighty-five degrees, and so on, gradually reducing the temperature as



---

heretofore directed, and using the vaginal injection in the bath.

The first day, if there be great pain, it may be necessary to take a sitz bath at one hundred and five degrees, with the usual vaginal injection, and then adopt the range of temperature before indicated.

Sometimes the hot sitz bath fails, and then fomentations over the region of the pain, from half an hour to an hour, hot as can possibly be borne, will prove effective.

Let the food be nourishing, but not stimulating. Let the head direct the hands in useful labor, or if the time be employed in reading, let it be historic and scientific, rather than the ideal and emotional, which reacts unfavorably on the uterus.

Intense love of music, and excessive devotion to the same, often induces too early and too profuse menstruation.

•



## DYSMENORRHEA.

---

### CAUSES AND CURE.

WE will next take under consideration Dysmenorrhea, or painful menstruation.

The causes of these monthly pangs are usually obscure, and the cure very uncertain. Sometimes they are of the neuralgic or rheumatic character. In such cases we can only palliate the pain, and during the intervening weeks do the best we can to improve the general health.

When there is a constitutional tendency to either of the above diseases, it is very likely to induce painful menstruation, because at that time more blood is sent to the uterus, and it is more highly vitalized; hence, neuralgic or rheumatic pains of that organ are more likely to occur then than at any other time.

### PERMANENT DYSMENORRHEA.

Often an irritable state of the uterus has been induced by wet feet and exposure to cold at the sensitive period, and permanent dysmenorrhea has been the result where there had been no pain before.

Sometimes there is a chronic inflammation of the uterus



---

Where this is the case, that disease must be cured before there can be relief from the monthly paroxysm. But for further particulars as to this condition, see chapter on that subject.

Again, stricture of the cervix may induce the same trouble, though rarely, and for a better understanding of this topic see chapter on Sterility.

#### TREATMENT.

But now to the point. What shall we do to palliate these pains when they do come, whatever may be the cause?

Hot applications are the most safe and most sure to give relief. Hot sitz and foot baths often ease the pain, as do fomentations applied over the abdomen as hot as they can be borne, and changed as often as they begin to cool; these, continued from twenty minutes to an hour, will allay the pain.

If there is a general chill, the sufferer will find a full hot bath at one hundred and five degrees very grateful. Keep the head cool with a wet cloth, and heat up the bath, if pain or chilliness require. From ten to thirty minutes will prove if such a bath gives the desired relief.

If these do not suffice, an anodyne must be used. We should first free the bowels with a large enema of water, at blood-heat (ninety-eight degrees), and then administer fifteen drops of laudanum in two or three spoonfuls of water into the rectum, which is to be retained. We prefer this method for the reason that a less amount of opium will give relief than by any other means; because, when re-



tained and absorbed, it comes directly in the region of the painful nerves, the same as we put laudanum in the cavity of an aching tooth instead of the stomach. But it is bad to rely on laudanum injections; for, if used regularly, we are apt to increase the amount, which will disturb digestion and induce constipation.

We have often used the injection above mentioned as a substitute for morphine, until we could get the case so far under our control that both could be dispensed with. The habit of taking brandy or whisky, morphine or McMunn's Elixir—indeed, any preparation of alcohol or opium—once a month, is greatly to be dreaded; for the result is often such that the poor girl not only doubles the dose but increases its frequency, so that a dram or a dose is taken upon the very slightest symptom.

#### A CAUTION.

The increase of inebriety and opium-eating among women should make every mother fear to give either of the above nostrums to her growing girls. There are, of course, extreme cases where a patient should be steadied by a stimulant, or soothed by a sedative; but let a scientific, conscientious physician, or discreet, self-possessed mother decide when it is necessary. Never give those remedies which are more powerful for evil than good into the hands of indiscreet young misses to be used at will.

Every woman should realize that, during her monthly illness, her nervous system is more sensitive than at other times. Hence she is then more liable to pain in the head,



---

back, loins, or to depression and discontent. If ill at ease in her social relation, once a month she is likely to feel and manifest it more than usual. A shock of severe sorrow coming at this period often induces mental derangement, sometimes suppression, sometimes hemorrhage, and at other times painful menstruation.



## PROLAPSUS UTERI.

---

### PECULIARITIES.

WE will next consider those infirmities, peculiar to women, which bear the disagreeable cognomen of "female diseases." Of late years they have become so frequent and so obstinate as to make it appear that woman is the "weaker vessel," physically speaking, at least.

These pelvic troubles are so numerous that professors, doctors, and authors class them under a special department. Despite the skill of the most learned in the medical profession, these diseases are slow and difficult to cure; or if cured, the constitution has been so much impaired, by the disease or the remedy, or both, that there is never much power of endurance afterward.

The most common of this class of complaints is Prolapsus Uteri, or "falling of the womb," or "bearing down," as it is frequently called. I mean, that we hear more said of this than of any other of the feminine infirmities, yet real displacement of this organ is less frequent than is supposed.

There are several mal-conditions of the pelvic viscera that induce this sensation of weight, weariness, dragging



---

and bearing down, which is very often mistaken for prolapsus.

IMAGINARY PROLAPSUS.

Any unpleasant feeling in this region is likely to be considered an indication of "falling of the womb." During the last twenty years, of the many women who have consulted me for this infirmity, not one in ten were suffering from uterine displacement. There might have been congestive fullness, or chronic inflammation of the uterus, vagina, rectum, bladder, or urethra, which caused that dragging weight or sensation of fullness that made the victim suspect that something was out of place, especially if she had a vivid imagination and had heard much of the horrors of "falling of the womb." But, just as the sore tooth is the longest, or the sore thumb aches most when it hangs down, so any of these local infirmities are increased by much standing, and the feeling of heaviness and dragging gives the impression of displacement.

Such is the contiguity of these delicate organs, being supplied as they are with nerves from the same section of the spine, that it is impossible for even an intelligent patient to decide, by the sensation of pain merely, which organ is diseased, or what is the matter. Even toothache, which is about as definite and positive as any pain we can endure, often can not be located exactly, and the dentist decides for us which is the offending tooth, the "ringleader," in all this agony. Is it strange, then, that women, to whom the pelvis is a sort of unknown country, save that they know



from personal experience that it is a locality as productive of misery as a Western marsh of ague—is it strange, I say, that they are often mistaken as to whether it is a mal-position or a mal-condition of the parts which induces the pain?

I could fill this little book with cases having a strange mixture of the sad and the ludicrous to illustrate this one point. For instance, a young lady was once brought to us on a bed and carried to her room with great care, as to position, it being supposed that she could not be raised up because she had falling of the womb so badly.

On going to her room the morning after she came (which was a cold one), I found her lying flat on her back, eating breakfast with white woolen mittens on her hands. When asked why she could not be raised in bed, or lie on her side, she said that the uterus fell from side to side, if she moved either way! From her description one would have supposed that it rolled around, like peas in a basin.

Now this young lady was really a serious invalid. She had a delicate constitution, worn by close study and teaching, until she had become dyspeptic, constipated, and weakened in the back by leucorrhea and profuse menstruation; but there was no mal-position of the parts.

I asked what made her first think she had “falling of the womb,” as she called it. “Why,” said she, “I felt weak and unable to walk or stand, and some persons, whom I supposed understood all these matters, told me I had falling of the womb; and so I took to bed to have things get in place, and to keep them there; but the longer I lay the



worse I felt, and the less able I was to get up. I could not submit to be examined by a male physician, so I was doctored by guess until I came to you."

I need not add, that before twenty-four hours had passed she sat up to eat, to evacuate the bowels, to take a sitz bath, etc., though for several months she had not been otherwise than in a horizontal position, for any purpose whatever; never even lying on her side.

Though much emaciated, and too weak to stand on her feet, in a few months she was about the house and grounds. This is a sample of many cases of a similar class.

#### SUPPORTERS, ETC.

The large number of utero-abdominal supporters, and of pessaries, which I have removed because they were unsuited to the case, would supply any thing short of a wholesale establishment with these kinds of instruments. The contrivances which I have seen used to support the uterus, which in a normal state weighs less than two ounces, are truly surprising, and suggestive of a very flimsy state of the maternal organs, which in the beginning were able to accomplish a great deal of useful labor without artificial aid.

The whole range of shoulder braces and abdominal supporters are invented to do the work for which muscles were designed, and, of course, at best can but imperfectly supply their places; because the former is the work of the Infinite, perfect artist, the latter of the finite and fallible. When, from disease or disuse, the muscles become too weak to do



their work, and we are obliged to resort to artificial support, we get a very imperfect substitute. Besides this, the longer we rely upon their aid, the less able we are to do without them; because animal tissue, unused, rapidly loses its vigor. Then, too, the pads and splints lessen the healthful circulation through the parts where they rest, and become a source of debility. More than this, spinal irritation is often induced by undue pressure. I know they give temporary relief, a sense of strength, just as the arm of a friend or the back of a rocking-chair may keep one up comfortably for a time, when too weak to sit up without such aid.

We should always remember that while all the voluntary muscles need rest, yet whatever takes their place permanently does not impart strength, but induces debility, and often most serious injury.

To illustrate: The fractured limb rests in splints, so that the broken bone may unite properly; but when this is accomplished, and the bandage and splints are removed, the muscles are so wasted by a few week's disuse that the limb is at first well-nigh powerless.

Many suppose that the uterus rests upon the front pad of the abdominal supporter; but this is a mistake, for the organ, when unimpregnated, is too small and lies too low to be supported, save indirectly, by any external aid. When the abdomen is large, and the muscles weak, a bandage or a supporter, well adjusted, may prevent the bowels from pressing painfully on the pelvic organs, of which the uterus is one.



As to internal supports called Pessaries, there have been invented thousands of them within the last twenty years; from the simple soft sponge, the ever-varying kinds of rubber, gutta percha, glass, and all manner of metals, up to silver and gold. The variety and number to be found in any wholesale instrument store are sadly suggestive, not only of the infirmities of womanhood, but of the impossibility of inventing any thing which will give perfect relief; for had any one of them been a success, there would have been no call for the multitude invented.

We hate the whole array of pessaries, and as a rule never use them; still this rule, like all others, has its exceptions. There are cases of complete *proidentia*, where the uterus has been external for months, or even years, when we are obliged to use some form of internal support. There are also some instances where this organ has been anteverted or retroverted for a long time, when some support, used temporarily, in connection with general treatment, will facilitate the cure. But these should only be used by the advice of an intelligent physician, who, having charge of the case, understands just what kind of instrument is required. But to treat any displacement by relying upon mere mechanical means alone, seems to us a great mistake.

#### CAUSES.

Joints may be dislocated by an unfortunate wrench, but the uterus is so small in its normal state, so nicely surrounded and supported by distensible tissue, that it is not liable to be displaced suddenly, though it has occurred some-



times from a jump or fall, when the parts are weak. The organ may lose its proper poise or balance, by some inflammatory action which increases its weight; or by constipation of the bowels and straining at stool it may be thrown too low, and from day to day held there so long as to prevent its returning readily to its normal position. Especially is this likely to occur, if the parts are relaxed from recent delivery.

The use of drastic cathartics, or continued constipation after confinement, are more likely to induce prolapsus than sitting, walking about, or even riding.

Retention of urine until the bladder is over-distended has a tendency to retrovert the fundus of the uterus, or turn it backward toward the rectum. Also, if the lower bowel be habitually loaded, it may antevert the uterus, that is, turn it forward on to the bladder. I have seen a great many cases of both these forms of displacement which were induced by these neglects.

Young ladies often come under our care suffering from weak backs, bearing-down pains, supposed prolapsus, etc., induced, they say, by going up long flights of stairs at boarding-schools. On inquiry, we often find that their habit has been to pass several days, even eight or ten, without an evacuation of the bowels, which in itself is sufficient to derange the healthful action, if not the healthful position, of all the organs from head to toe. The impacted rectum often induces great irritability of the bladder or of the uterus, or both.

Among our early patients, we remember a young lady



who came from a city school to our Cure, suffering from an inability to retain urine more than ten or fifteen minutes.

On examination, we found the rectum distended and heavily loaded with fæces, and consequently the fundus of the uterus pressed forward against the bladder. By keeping the bowels free with enemata of cold water and cold sitz baths, with much friction upward and backward over the abdomen, the parts regained their normal position, and all irritability of the bladder disappeared.

A loaded rectum often induces a frequent and even constant desire to urinate, although there may be no displacement, such is the sympathy of these contiguous organs. Supplied as they are by nerves and vessels from the same section, if one is burdened the other feels bad. So, we often cure cases of severe irritability of the bladder simply by correcting constipation.

Skirts, unsupported by the shoulders, press the abdominal viscera upon the pelvic organs, and induce varied displacements and discomforts in that region, which are expressed by the general term, "a bearing-down feeling."

Neither long walks nor long flights of stairs, or even heavy work are likely to induce uterine displacements, unless the disease has been first invited by some of the bad habits above named. The good Father made even "the weaker vessels" strong enough for all practical purposes, if they are well used.

But suppose you are like the old lady who was "weak in her lower parts," what shall you do to strengthen them?



## TREATMENT.

First of all, adjust your clothing as directed in Mrs. M. M. Jones's book, entitled "*Woman's Dress*." \* Then correct your constipation, about which we will speak in another chapter.

Take two sitz baths a day, of from five to ten minutes duration, beginning with the temperature at about eighty-five degrees and reducing it to sixty degrees as you become accustomed to them and can bear without being chilled after leaving the bath. While in the bath, rub the bowels with a circular motion, making the pressure upward. If you have an assistant at hand, just before getting out of the bath have the back washed down the whole length of the spine, which is an excellent tonic when the shoulders are weak and weary, or when there is pain between them.

The wet girdle, heretofore described, is a valuable aid, worn nights, or both night and day, if it can be worn comfortably and without chilliness.

Voluntary action of the abdominal muscles, and those about the pelvis, practiced several times a day, and for several minutes each time, will give them tone, and thus furnish a better support. This can be accomplished by deep inspirations and expirations, which alternately throw out the bowels and then bring them back close to the spine as possible. Also, by the will, contract those muscles which form the floor or bottom of the pelvic basin, those sphinc-

\* This work is published and for sale by WOOD & HOLBROOK, Nos. 13 & 15 Laight Street, New York. Price 30 cents



---

ters which close the rectum, bladder, and vagina. These all act favorably on the prolapsed uterus.

The impression that reaching or raising the hands above the head induces displacement is incorrect, for it does just the opposite, helps to replace all the prolapsed organs. Any one lightly and loosely clad can feel the muscles grow tense at the bottom of the body as the hands are thrown up with force. Of course, ladies with their arms pinioned at the shoulder, and the floating ribs fastened at the waist, find all these motions painful or impossible.

Dio Lewis's Light Gymnastics are excellent to prevent these diseases among those of sedentary habits. Dr. Taylor's Swedish Movements are an admirable method of cure, bringing into play and into place disused and displaced muscles and organs.

Prolapsus is much more frequent among those who have no occupation than among those who do a reasonable amount of active work; then, the muscular system is kept vigorous, and thus all within and without is in its proper place



## LEUCORRHEA.

---

### CHARACTER.

**A**MONG the special infirmities which sap the freshness of girlhood and the strength of womanhood, that of Leucorrhea is one of the most prominent and prevalent in these days of physical degeneracy. Ancient medical authors speak of it as a disease incident to women worn with frequent child-bearing and prolonged nursing, in connection with over-work, but now it often begins with maturing girlhood.

In taking the history of patients as to the date of symptoms, I often find that leucorrhea began with menstruation, and that many ladies suppose it to be a natural and needed drain, till so reduced by it that they were obliged to seek advice, and then learned that it was the result of disease.

What is leucorrhea, fluor albus, or whites? All discharges from the vagina, except the regular monthly flow. It may be yellow or greenish in tint, it may be thick and white—a milky white—or ropy and tenacious, like the white of an egg.

As to quantity, it may be only a slight soil on ordinary



---

linen, or so profuse as to require a guard (napkin), constantly.

As to its characteristics, it may be bland and unirritating, or so acrid as to induce much local soreness and irritation, giving a constant sense of discomfort about the parts. Whatever its peculiarities, it is attended with debility, and often much positive pain.

#### LOCATION OF THE DISEASE.

The question is often asked, "Where does all this drain come from?" To answer this, you must first understand that all internal cavities of the body that have an external outlet or opening are lined with a skin of delicate structure, which is called the mucous membrane. In its healthful condition it secretes or manufactures a fluid, which we call mucus, to lubricate the parts so that they may perform their functions without irritation. Now when this membrane or internal skin is diseased the quantity and quality of the secretions are perverted, sometimes suppressed entirely, sometimes increased in amount or deteriorated in character.

To illustrate: With a cold comes dryness of the nasal passages and throat, the result of inflammation, which in due time is followed by an increased secretion that brings relief to the congested surfaces, or as people say, it is "the breaking up of a cold." In ordinary cases, this restores the healthful normal condition. But if circumstances are unfavorable, habits imprudent, constitution bad, then this common cold "runs into" catarrh, laryngitis, bronchitis,



etc. That is, the mucous surfaces which line these passages continue to secrete abnormally, and chronic disease is the result.

So, the organs of which we are writing have the same delicate covering, and become congested or inflamed, and the result is acute or chronic disease, as above described. Of course, every organ has its own peculiar secretion, both in health and in disease; still the mucous secretions of every part of the body have some characteristics in common and are governed by the same general law.

When leucorrhea exists it may come from within the uterus, or from the outside of the cervix uteri, or from the vaginal passage leading to it. The character and quantity of the leucorrhea will vary according to the section affected, the severity of the disease, and the extent of surface involved.

#### CAUSES.

The causes which may induce this condition are varied. Some persons inherit a tendency to disease of the mucous surfaces, so that with slight provocation they have congestion of the air-passages, or of those we are now considering.

A severe cold may induce hemorrhage from the lungs or hemorrhage from the uterus. It may cause congestion of one organ or of the other, according to the constitutional tendency or susceptibility at the time. This attack may terminate in a complete cure or chronic disease, according to the treatment or recuperative power of the patient.



---

Cold feet and limbs are likely to induce local congestion.

Crinoline, in cold weather, calls for heavy woolen underdrawers, and thick cotton ones over them, to keep up the capillary circulation. If the blood does not circulate freely through the surface, then some of the internal organs must have an excess of blood and become congested.

Tight dressing also invites local disease, by impeding the returning circulation.

Constipation, and an undue effort to evacuate the bowels, induces excessive turgescence to the parts, which may become permanent.

The early reading of exciting books, which invites thoughts and feelings unsuited to girlhood, tend to create a fullness of blood in the uterine organs. So also of late hours and social gayety.

Stimulating food, condiments, wines, and hot drinks have a bad effect at the impressible age.

Mental emotion has more to do with the inducing of special disease than is generally supposed.

We have seen many cases of uterine inflammation evidently induced by grief for a husband or lover who had died, or deserted, or proved untrue. A chronic heartache of this sort invites disease of the uterus, and makes it difficult to cure. By this we do not mean that all who live under the shadow of some great social sorrow are liable to some special disease. Grief well borne makes every fiber of flesh and spirit the firmer, while that which is brooded over develops an undesirable list of physical and mental



infirmities. Strength and comfort comes to desolate hearts just in proportion as they are able to forget themselves and live for others, and bodies diseased and debilitated by morbid mental emotion may grow strong and well in the same way

#### MEANS OF CURE.

As to the treatment of leucorrhea, and of the diseased surfaces from which it proceeds, sitz baths, ranging from sixty to eighty degrees, as can best be borne by the patient and leave her warm after, of from five to ten minutes duration, twice a day, with vaginal injections by use of the force-pump syringe while in the bath, are always safe and serviceable. The wet girdle, described in the chapter on Menorrhagia, is also good, worn night or day, or both, if the patient can keep comfortably warm with it on.

If the leucorrhea be acrid, warm castile soap-suds is good for vaginal injections; also, Labarraque's Solution of Chloride of Soda, which may be procured at most druggists. Take of it a table-spoonful in half a pint of soft water, for a daily vaginal injection. If the leucorrhea is profuse but not irritating, use alum-water, or a tea-spoonful of tannin in half a pint of water, for the injection. If there is sensitiveness of the parts consequent upon the discharge, use from five to fifteen drops of carbolic acid in half a pint of water.

In many cases, the uterus and its appendages have been so long diseased that special surgical treatment is required to effect a cure; but on these we will not dwell, as all such cases must be left to the attending physician.



---

The treatment above suggested will palliate, even when it will not cure, and when used in connection with special treatment, it is of service. Many are prejudiced against speculum treatment, thinking that the general constitution is injured thereby. This has arisen from the fact that many practitioners rely exclusively upon mere local treatment, without due attention to those habits which induced the disease, or to such general constitutional measures as are necessary to establish permanent health.

We have seen many cases where the patients were under special surgery for months, till the local inflammation was quite subdued, but who felt little if any better than at the beginning of the treatment. Sometimes the nervous system had become exceedingly irritable, from the long-continued local appliances. This has led many to object to all special means, and to rely on general treatment entirely. From long observation of this class of cases, we have no doubt but that the two may be most successfully combined, making the cure both prompt and permanent; numerous cases which would fail under either method alone, succeed where there is due attention paid to both local and general treatment.

We have had many patients, whom good practitioners had tried in vain to cure at home, who improved rapidly when relieved from their ordinary home cares, and when to such local applications as the case required were added baths, and simplicity of diet, dress, and such mode of life as would tend to improve the general health. Those who are not thus favorably situated for a complete cure, are left



very feeble for months after their term of local surgery is ended, and have to go to the sea-side, to mineral springs, or into the country, to rally from the consequent depression.

Judicious general treatment lessens the amount of special treatment required, and hence the two should be combined. We have known many patients to be lying in bed, cured of the local disease, but whom it was exceedingly difficult, after this tax upon their general health and strength, to restore to a vigorous and healthful tone of body.



## PREGNANCY.

---

### INDICATIONS OF.

**S**UPPRESSION of the monthly flow, without any other assignable cause, is to the wife a probable sign of pregnancy. If her health has been good, her menses regular as to time and amount, and if no severe sickness or sudden shock, mental or physical, intervened since the last period, she has good reason to suppose conception has taken place.

Chills, fever, or other acute disease may delay the menstrual period; or marked improvement in the general health, by change of place or of treatment, may arrest the flow for several months in women of delicate constitutions. In the one case, the vital current has been too much exhausted to carry on this function; in the other, it is being used in building up the system; but in either condition, one need not feel anxious if well, or growing better.

Occasionally, pregnancy and a continued monthly flow like the menses coexist. As to the nature of this secretion doctors differ, and we will not discuss the point, but merely add that if there is a drain of bright color when pregnancy is suspected, great care should be taken, not only at the time.



but until after the next month or two has been safely passed. For directions on this point see chapter on Abortions.

Those who are over-anxious to become pregnant, and those who are over-fearful lest they shall become so, are both liable to exaggerate symptoms, and think they are pregnant when they are not. The only comfortable condition is to accept fertility or sterility, knowing that a contented spirit makes either of these blessed and beautiful.

Water treatment, properly applied, will prevent or palliate many of the discomforts and diseases incident to and subsequent upon pregnancy.

#### STOMACH TROUBLES.

First on the list usually stands nausea and vomiting, which, when combined with suspension of the menses, confirms the suspicion of pregnancy, though they both sometimes result from uterine disease. But if the wife is otherwise well, we may decide upon the former condition.

We are often asked, "Why do so many women vomit during the early period of pregnancy, and seldom after four and a half months?" The best of physicians speak of the stomach-sickness as arising from sympathy with the uterus, which is a way of saying that it comes through some nervous influence not well understood. True, it is strange that nausea so often attends the first months of pregnancy, and so rarely the last.

Some physicians think they must always explain every medical mystery. One says the vomiting is to prevent the



---

plethora which would result from menstrual suppression. Another, that it arises from excess in eating, women being so given to gormandizing during gestation. Both seem to forget that the arrested vital current, and also a good amount of good food are requisite to furnish nourishment for the growth of the new being. Certain it is, had these members of the profession vomited for months, casting up every thing but Jonah, until every part was emaciated save the abdominal region, such preposterous theories would never have been propounded.

Many a prospective mother has found by experience that the less she ate the more she vomited, or felt like doing so. The retching and lack of nutrition render the stomach more and more irritable, and less and less tolerant of food.

#### “LONGINGS.”

If there is any article particularly desired, try it; for whatever is eaten with a relish is more likely to be retained and digested than that which is taken under protest. This, as a general rule, holds true; of course, there are mischievous compounds which no human stomach can well dispose of, and which no human appetite will crave unless it has been sadly perverted.

Sometimes the simplest food will be rejected, while something more appetizing would be retained. We have nothing definite to say about “longings,” only that where there is nausea there is a desire for something new, which should be gratified. A traveler on shipboard said he would not



bid his supper "good night," as he expected to see it again before morning. Many mothers, starting out on this nine-months voyage, see all meals so many times that they need a great variety in their bill of fare.

#### REMEDIES FOR STOMACH TROUBLES.

Diversion, change of place, out-door life, and baths are beneficial to pregnant ladies. Sometimes the swallowing of bits of ice will allay the nausea; at other times, cold wet compresses over the stomach will relieve; again, *hot* fomentations over the stomach and liver for ten or fifteen minutes are serviceable, followed by the wet girdle.

If the patient be really prostrated for want of food, then broth, beef tea, or chicken tea should be used, and if these are rejected, take a little brandy, or the best stimulus that can be obtained, immediately after eating. I remember having been called to a young wife who had borne her suffering quietly, bravely, until she was so emaciated that her friends became alarmed for her life. She rallied on beef tea and brandy, taking a small amount of the latter immediately after eating. In a short time beefsteak broiled, with a little salt and no butter, was taken twice a day. The brandy was dispensed with as soon as her stomach would retain food without it, and during the last few months she grew plump and strong on graham mush, graham bread, etc.

Sometimes a bitter tonic, or mild preparation of iron may be a good substitute for the stimulus.

The pregnant woman eats for two, and though one is



---

small, it is growing and she has a very distressing sense of prostration when the supply is inadequate to the demand. Husbands and friends are often not sufficiently thoughtful on this point, and say with a smile, "Oh, there is a good reason for her vomiting!" But there is also a good reason why she needs to be nourished, and hence her every want, in reference to food, should be anticipated, if possible.

Something unexpected, something furnished by a friend, is much more grateful than any thing she has herself planned and provided. Of course, we know there are foolish, freaky, fastidious women, who take their condition as an apology for making more fuss than is necessary about food, and other matters, but it is hard to correct such in person, and we will not try to do it through the medium of this book.

#### PALLIATIVE TREATMENT DURING THE EARLY MONTHS.

Constipation is often an attendant on early pregnancy, sometimes during the entire term. The use of cathartics as a corrective is very undesirable, as they, if continued, irritate the stomach, and if the lady be weak, they tend to induce abortion. Frequently the obstruction of the bowels is merely mechanical, that is, the enlarging uterus remains in the pelvis during the first months, and so presses on the rectum as to interfere with its normal action. Often one-half pint of water, at seventy-five degrees, injected into the bowels will secure an easy evacuation. If the liver is torpid, as will be indicated by a sallow skin and a bitter taste in the mouth, see chapter on Constipation.



The position of the gravid uterus, above alluded to, often induces irritability of the bladder, a sense of weight and bearing down, a desire to urinate frequently, backache, etc. All these discomforts are greatly relieved by taking one or two sitz baths a day, as cool as can be borne, and getting a good reaction afterward; beginning at eighty-five degrees and reducing to seventy degrees, or even sixty degrees, if one readily becomes warm after its use. If there is much backache, wear the wet girdle at night, and by day if it can be worn comfortably. If there is leucorrhea, use vaginal injections in the sitz baths.

About the fourth month the uterus rises out of the pelvic basin into the abdominal cavity, and relieves the bladder and rectum of this pressure, if the abdominal muscles are strong and furnish due support.

If the unpleasant symptoms do not subside, the sitz bath, with friction and the wet girdle, should be continued. The dress should be loose at the waist, and so supported as to allow for expansion upward. If the ribs are now pressed in, then the uterus presses downward and outward, too much over-taxing the muscles of the lower abdomen, which often induces great debility after delivery.

#### EXERCISE.

Active exercise is important during pregnancy, but not overwork; the latter often breaks down the mother, or when she endures it, enfeebles the child. Pregnant women are very likely to go to extremes. Sometimes they think that having babies is such heavy work that they can be



---

excused from manual labor or any active exercise: so they lie about, read, dream, do fancy work, etc. By so doing, their general health and strength is lessened, and thereby delivery rendered more difficult.

Tedious labor is much more common among those who live at ease (if women ever do), than among the laboring classes. That is, women who reside in city or town, and keep servants, suffer more during maternity than those who live in the country and do their own work.

Natural delivery is accomplished by muscular action on the part of the mother. Hence, other things being equal, its ready performance depends on good, enduring strength as much as any other labor. Those women who have a sensitive, excitable, nervous system, are more liable to convulsions than those of a quiet temperament, with good muscular development. The good getting up after confinement, also depends largely on good health before.

There is a class of women who are likely to overwork during pregnancy. Their quickened circulation induces an intense desire to do every thing, or have it done "just right." They possess so intense a sense of responsibility, and of the importance of every thing in their domain, that neither husband, friends, nor domestics can make life easy for them. Such persons, if they do not wear themselves out, so use up their life-force that they impart too small a share to their offspring.

One of the smartest women for business I ever knew, the mother of a large family, brought me her last daughter, a hopeless invalid, and she still in excellent health, and her



husband a vigorous man. After we had talked over the case, she looked at me with peculiar earnestness and said, "What is the matter with all my children; did I kill them before they were born?"

The cases are not rare where the finest business women have feeble children. Thus, it will be seen, this tendency to extremes ought to be guarded against. Some need to be encouraged to exercise, and others need to be restrained from work.

We have in mind many sad cases where two or three little ones have been left motherless, because the young wife had not sufficient physical power to endure frequent child-bearing, and meet all the demands, self-imposed or otherwise, which rested upon her.

Quick consumption, or some other acute disease, takes off many soon after delivery, and more live enfeebled, feeling old while they are yet young, and finally die of chronic disease, who, with proper consideration at the right time, might have lived for years in good health.

#### NERVOUS SUSCEPTIBILITY.

Pregnant women are likely to be peculiarly susceptible, and hence have their strong likes and dislikes in regard to persons, places, and things. We can not explain the cause, except that in some way the increased activity of the uterus reacts on the nervous system, making it super-sensitive.

Many stories of longings and aversions are both strange and true, yet hard to explain, and the feeling harder still to control. Women can do more toward governing and guid



---

ing themselves in their habits of thought and feeling than any one can do for them. How far people are responsible for the freaks and fancies which make fools of them, no one knows but the Father above. My opinion is that many might manage themselves so as to be quite consistent, if they began early to practice self-control; but that there comes a time when it is impossible to do so; that they have yielded to these feelings and fancies till they are ruled by them, and it is hard to resume the reins which have long been resigned.

Simple habits and early hours would save sensitive women from many nervous troubles during pregnancy. They need more sleep than at other times, and if over-taxed, or over-excited, are made wakeful, so that they get less than usual. A large amount of sleep acts not only as a sedative on the mother's over-excited nervous system, but favors the healthful development of the foetus.

#### INHERITANCE.

About the whole subject of "mother's marks," as they are termed, there is much mystery. Every woman can tell a series of sad stories of marks and deformities, the result of some vivid impression on the maternal mind during pregnancy. Of this class there is a long list, well authenticated by the best of medical authority.

As these terrible incidents are very generally known to exist, I will not dwell on them, for they rather tend to terrify and trouble the prospective mother than to help her to a hopeful and cheerful equanimity.



The story of Jacob and the peeled rods is still repeated in fact, though not in form. But to all the rules of antenatal impressions, there are so many exceptions that we must conclude the law is not well understood; that while a very few receive the feared blemish, the many go unharmed.

For instance: a friend of mine, frightened by a dog, was haunted for months with the fear that she had marked her baby; on the contrary, it was the most beautiful child of the seven she had borne, so that her fun-loving husband said, if they had another boy, he "hoped his wife would think of a dog's head beforehand."

Thus much for the comfort of those who have been scared and kept scared. Job said the thing he greatly feared had come upon him, but this is not often true with pregnant women, according to my observation; perhaps because most of the ladies who come to stay with me during confinement are invalids, and hence are more likely to be "worried with visions," and "terrified with dreams" which never come to pass.

Do not understand me as speaking lightly of the mental condition of the mother in reference to her unborn. The state of her mind and her surroundings should be the best possible to obtain, because both are likely to impress the child. The point is, the mother is not to worry about that which can not be controlled, but to keep her own body and spirit in the best estate possible, and thus do what she can for her unborn.

A dear friend of mine, a beautiful young wife, was with



---

me at medical lectures during the first months of her pregnancy. She was in excellent health and good cheer; she was one of the most efficient in the dissecting-room, and self-possessed at clinics. Though she never seemed troubled, still I was sometimes anxious on her account, and when any thing peculiarly trying to our sensibilities came before the class, I would propose that we should leave, to which she always replied, "I think we may as well remain," and a look at her pleasant, placid face reassured me and made me feel it was safe for her to do so. About four months after leaving college she gave birth to a beautiful daughter, who is now a young lady of much promise.

There is a sense of maternal responsibility which dignifies, steadies, and strengthens, and thus carries mother and child unharmed through the most trying surroundings. There is another sort which wears and worries, and though the blemish feared may not afflict the body, the spirit may bear life-long infelicities, the result of a morbid mental or emotional life on the part of the mother.

We can say with one of old, "we do not know how the bones or brain grow in the womb."

Let the prospective mother be every way as good as she can and then rest in Him who orders all our ways, to bring a blessed result.

From generations past to generations yet unborn, the sins of the father will be visited upon the children.

Mothers have an important part in this link of ancestral



inheritance. Let them bring in their line of light upon this world, shaded by sin, sorrow, and sickness.

It is a common saying, and for the most part a true one, that to have good children we must have a good mother; still we are often startled to find wayward girls and wicked boys whose parents were worthy people. Here the fault may be in the family discipline, or rather the lack of it. Or, could we trace the ancestral line, we might find it to terminate, not in "a waxed-end, but in some stronger twine," as Saxe once said.

As to whether our children will "turn out well," depends upon a great many combinations, some of which are under our own control, others are too far in the past or future for us to reach.

I once commended a friend, who was blind, for being so cheerful, and expressing my wonder that he could be so happy when he had lost what was to him so much, he replied: "It is a rule of mine to never worry about the past, which I can not recall; nor of the future, which I don't know about, and to make the most of the present." A good rule for every prospective mother. In all the habits of body, thought, and emotion, let her cherish that which she would like to have reproduced in her child, and then, whatever the result, she will have no occasion for remorse, that sharpest sting in any sorrow.

Children seem to me often like striped prints—here a line of the father, here of the mother, and there of the relatives, more or less remote.

We laugh about the old lady who said she inherited her



---

disease from her maiden aunt, and still she told the truth, or nearly so, or rather they both inherited the same infirmity from sires more or less remote. The vein of indirect inheritance runs on, now apparent and now hidden from view, like the stream which glides sometimes above ground and sometimes beneath its surface.

Because peculiarities of inheritance are often mixed or far-fetched, many mothers, therefore, fail to realize their own personal responsibility in the matter.

Many times, in the care of chronic invalids, I find some peculiar tendency to irritability or mental depression which I can not explain, and ask if there was any thing unfortunate in their mother's condition previous to their birth, and often receive for reply, "I was an unwelcome child, and my mother was very unhappy in the prospect of another baby, and I, too, wish I had never been born."

Sometimes there comes a sad story of domestic trouble, which gives a peculiar despondency, a bitter hopelessness to the young heart. The ordinary trials of life, family sickness, or death even, seldom leave an unfavorable impress on the unborn, if the mother bears her grief with due Christian resignation.

#### DISCOMFORTS OF ADVANCED PREGNANCY.

During the latter months of pregnancy there is sometimes pressure of blood to the head, which formerly was relieved by bleeding. The modern method is to control such tendencies by diet, unless the symptoms are acute and very severe.



In such cases, both the quality and quantity of food should be restricted. Bread, fruit, and vegetables are best, with little or no meat, and neither coffee, stimulants, nor rich food. Many feel burdened and restless at night; such persons will usually sleep better with a late dinner and no supper.

During the last month of pregnancy, two meals will usually be better than one. Or, if there is a sense of faintness at night without food, a little bread may allay it. It is not that we wish to hold pregnant women to any rigid system of diet, but, with the crowded position of the stomach, digestion is slow, and two meals well digested will sustain life better than three imperfectly assimilated.

During advanced pregnancy, the pressure on the returning vessels is such as to induce bloating of the limbs. Where this is the case, they will be greatly relieved by rubbing them in a shallow bath; that is, sitting up in a bath with limbs extended, while an attendant with a strong hand briskly rubs the limbs in water at from seventy-five to eighty-five degrees, according to the strength of the patient's reactive power. If there is no tub at hand suitable for this, then, after the sitz bath, sit in a chair and put the feet in the tub, having the limbs well bathed and rubbed once or twice a day. If hot and painful at night, wrap them in wet towels, with dry cotton or flannel over, as may be necessary to keep them comfortably warm.

If the bowels bloat, so as to make sitting or walking difficult, wear a wet bandage constantly, with a dry one over it, firmly pinned and fitted, so as to furnish the most com-



---

plete support possible. If it does not keep in place well, then attach a strap or band about each limb to hold it down. If the bandage be cut bias and gored, so as to fit the form, it will furnish a more perfect support, and keep better in place, than a towel or strip of straight cloth.

When one approaches full term, restless nights may be relieved by a large enema for the bowels and a sitz bath just before retiring; also, the wet girdle for the night. Often it is well to leave the sitz bath in the sleeping room, and after the first nap, if pain and restlessness return, another sitz, with the bandage renewed, will secure a second sleep.

#### CARE OF THE BREASTS BEFORE CONFINEMENT.

In many cases, due attention to the breasts during pregnancy would prevent much trouble after delivery. Soon after conception takes place, usually within a month or six weeks, the breasts become fuller and stinging pains are present. The nipples are more prominent and sensitive, the colored circle about the base becomes broader, and of a darker hue.

These symptoms sometimes help to decide whether conception has taken place. But as they occur to some extent when the menses is near, in cases of uterine disease, and where there is suppression from other causes, we can not rely upon them. Besides this, the appearance of the nipples varies in different persons, hence the proof of change



in them is not clear unless they have been previously examined.

When there is heat, pain, or much sensitiveness, wash them freely in cold water, and if this does not allay the discomfort put on wet compresses. Take especial care that no whalebones, or other means of compression, prevent the full development of the breasts.

How shall we ward off sore nipples, of which so much is said and more felt? To prevent such an affliction, I know of nothing better than bathing them freely in cold water every day during pregnancy, and rolling them between thumb and finger to toughen the cuticle and accustom it to pressure. Some use alum-water, tannin, or other astringents; but we have more faith in friction than in whatever may be applied, as by it the skin on any part of the body thickens and loses its sensitiveness.

Sometimes the nipple becomes flat, sunken, or retracted as the breasts enlarge. If so, it should be drawn out, *not* by suction or breast pump, as this would be liable to induce a premature delivery, but by gentle traction with thumb and finger, several times a day. If this does not suffice, shields, with broad bases and openings, should be worn.

If the nipple be rough, like a raspberry, it is more likely to become excoriated or fissured than if it present a smooth surface. Under such circumstances, add a grain of sulphate of zinc to an ounce of rose-water in a wide-mouthed bottle (like those used for morphine), then tilt the bottle upon the nipple and let it remain for a few minutes, several



---

times a day. If the nipple be smooth, and still there is sensitiveness which water does not allay, then make a solution of

Borax.....	20 grs.
Tannin.....	5 grs
Brandy.....	1 oz.
Water.....	1 oz.

and apply once or twice per day, in the manner above described.



## APPROACHING CONFINEMENT.

---

### PREMONITORY SYMPTOMS.

THE symptoms of approaching confinement vary with different individuals, and with the same person at different times. Many feel better than usual a few days previous. So, country doctors expect a call soon, when they know that a pregnant patient is having one of "Dinah's clairin' up times." Not that the over-exertion hurries on the delivery, but because during the last week or ten days, sometimes two weeks, the uterus contracts insensibly, subsides, or settles down; hence, encroaches less on the stomach and liver. After this change, respiration and digestion go on better, and this lightening up quickens the business sense, and the prospective mother "puts her house in order," before resigning it to other hands. But this sign, like all others, sometimes fails to appear, and hence the question, "how to count?" is one of interest.

The normal duration of pregnancy is two hundred and eighty days. Conception usually takes place within a week or ten days after the cessation of the monthly flow, hence forty weeks from this time brings to full term. There are occasional cases where conception occurs just before a



---

monthly period. With the first child, delivery often occurs two weeks short of the usual term. Then, too, there are well-authenticated cases of pregnancy continuing more than nine months. Of this class I have seen several, and still nothing unfortunate occurred to either mother or child.

With all these variations, there is uncertainty in the most careful reckoning. Some count correctly from "the period of quickening;" that is, when they first feel motion, at four and a half months. But the strength and activity of the little one varies, and so also the sensibility of mothers, and hence some perceive "life within" before the fourth month, and another not until after the fifth.

I remember well a patient of mine who was sure she had a uterine tumor, because she did not "feel motion," though I could detect it very distinctly. It was not until after the beginning of the sixth month that *she* was satisfied as to her condition.

The first sensation of quickening is like the flutter of a bird, just above the pubis, and sometimes is not recognized. Others mistake some motion of gas in the bowels for action within the uterus. Therefore, the first motion is a point to guess from, but not an exact datum.

Among the positive signs of the approach of labor is the increased fullness of the external parts; also, an augmented amount of mucous secretion. This is a good symptom, indicating a tendency to relaxation, and promises an easy labor.

Another precursory sign is a feeling of anxiety and de-



pression of spirits, without apparent cause, or a sort of nervous chill.

Among the positive symptoms is the slight show of bloody mucus which escapes from the mouth of the uterus when it begins to dilate, which may occur some time before, at others not till after pain is experienced. Occasionally, a frequent desire to evacuate the bowels or bladder occurs, also nausea and vomiting, which, in the early part of labor, is a good symptom, as it relaxes the system. Along with these come the tremor and the shivering, without sense of cold; and, finally, the rupture and discharge of the sack of waters. This is about the usual order of sensations, but often they are reversed without any bad results beyond the fact that labor is likely to be more lingering, and constitutes what is called "a dry birth."

Sometimes, without any premonitory symptoms, the waters may escape, and several hours, even days, pass before pains commence. I well remember my anxiety in reference to one of my first obstetric cases, when a week passed after the discharge of the liquor amni before labor began, and still no harm ensued to mother or child. The unexpected news of the death of a dear friend was the apparent cause of this unusual phenomenon.

Sometimes there are spurious pains, or "a false alarm," as it is called. These are irregular as to the intervals and duration, and are of a wandering character, while in true labor the pains have a definite location, running across the back over the thighs or over the lower part of the abdomen, increasing in frequency and severity. It usually takes a



---

little time to decide to which class they belong, but in either case it is well to take a large enema of tepid water, having an attendant pump slowly, and using from one to two or three quarts, as can be borne, so as to free the bowels perfectly. This is an important preparation for delivery, and makes one comfortable after confinement without an evacuation for two or three days. Sometimes these irregular pains are induced by a loaded state of the bowels, and when they are thus freed the patient may pass twenty-four hours, or several days even, comfortably, before real labor ensues.

Many times women are worn with these irregular contractions for days before delivery, when an enema, a warm sitz bath, and a wet girdle would allay them till the appropriate time. If these do not suffice, an injection of laudanum, from fifteen to twenty-five drops in a little water, taken to retain, may relieve the pain. As to the temperature of the bath, if the patient is chilly, with a bad, indistinct sense of discomfort, a warm bath will be most grateful.

If there is a feverish state, a sitz bath from eighty-five to seventy-five degrees, according to the habit of the patient as to baths, will be best. If after a free movement of the bowels, and the bath, the patient does not become more quiet, but, on the contrary, the pains increase in severity, become more frequent, and are of longer duration, we may conclude the uterus has begun action, and will not cease until it has completed its work.

#### PREPARATION.

At this stage of advancement the patient should be so



clad that she can sit up, walk about, or lie down, as she prefers. Let her dress be such as will bear washing, and can also be easily removed. Her night-dress and chemise may be folded up across the back and fastened in front, so as to be kept dry, and thus save the trouble of removing them immediately after delivery. Next her person a folded sheet should be adjusted, which can be changed during labor, or at the close, as comfort and cleanliness may require.

The bed should be protected by oil-silk or rubber-cloth, two yards square, and over this an old quilt, folded sheets, or some material which will readily absorb moisture. A piece of carpeting should be placed on the floor in front of the bed.

It is well to have at hand several sheets, napkins, or towels, some fresh lard or sweet oil; also, a small woolen blanket or piece of flannel, scissors, and ligature for the service of the little stranger.



## DELIVERY.

---

UNTIL near the end of the ninth month the uterus enlarges, not by stretching, like an inflated sack, but increasing in size, retaining about the same thickness of its walls. Why, at the end of the two hundred and eighty days, or thereabouts, it not only ceases to enlarge, but contracts and expels its contents, we do not know, and will say with the devout Frenchman, "God wills it so."

These uterine contractions induce what are called "labor pains"—a strong muscular effort of the uterus, from which it rests alternately and with regularity, as if it had a hard task which could only be accomplished by work and rest in turn.

When labor has commenced, if it lingers because "the pains," as we say, or the uterine contractions, are weak and inefficient, then a cold sitz bath, with friction over back and bowels, is a good stimulant; also, a wet bandage with a dry one over, pinned snugly around. We regard the bandage as an important aid to the abdominal muscles when they are weak, especially in those cases where many children have been borne.

When the first stage of labor, that is, the dilatation of the



mouth of the uterus, is lingering, it is often trying to both physician and patient, because the latter feels as if she was "not getting on any," that she suffers all for nothing, and ought to be relieved. Just then the sitz bath helps by making a little change, resting and keeping up the strength. If the feet are cold, a hot foot bath, taken with the sitz, equalizes the circulation and steadies the nervous system.

Women often feel as if they were too sick to be moved, and yet if they would sit up or walk about their strength would hold out better, and the change of position would often help on the process.

The left side is the position we prefer during delivery, though we allow the patient to rest on the back, with limbs flexed, if she chooses. But she should not be confined to any place during the first stage of labor. Let her not think her troubles are nearly ended, when they are just begun. She endures much better to know the truth, that while these dilating or "grinding pains," as they are termed, are the most trying to faith and patience, still it is best to make the least of them possible; to encourage her to sit up, move about, talk a little on subjects rather diverting than otherwise, and so help her over that part of labor for which there can be little relief.

We have met some cases where the process of dilatation was passed very promptly and easily, sometimes unconsciously, but this happy experience is very rare, especially during the first delivery. Sometimes when the pains grow inefficient in the *last* stage of labor, we spur them on by



---

rubbing ice rapidly over the back and bowels, and thus stimulate the exhausted energies.

Many times we should apparently have been obliged to resort to instruments, but for the prompt stimulus of cold to the flagging muscles. If, on the contrary, the pains are strong and the parts rigid and undilatable, the warm sitz bath and warm vaginal injection are of service to relax the tense tissue.

When labor is too far advanced for these, and still the externals resist so firmly that there is danger of laceration, have, between the pains, warm cloths applied. Of course, we do not dispense with the support which the attendant gives when the pains return.

Let the "lying-in" room be kept quiet and cheerful. The old fashion of inviting in as many friends as you would want for a quilting seems to us, now, a foolish one. We once supposed it necessary, and hence had a horrid idea of the process which made a woman so very sick as to require a half-dozen attendants. A physician, husband, and nurse seem to us all that are usually needed. Nervous women, with all manner of fears and foolish suggestions, are a positive nuisance, where cheer, courage, and a little judicious help is usually all that is required.

A strong sheet thrown around the foot-board, and put within the reach of the patient's hands, may enable her to pull and press downward when necessary. A box or broad stool at her feet to press against, helps to steady her limbs. A large roll, as a quilt or pillow, pinned snugly in a sheet, should be placed between the knees, if the patient occupies



the usual position on the left side. The attendant may sit on the bed, pressing her back against that of the patient, if desired.

When at medical lectures, a new invention, an obstetrical supporter, was exhibited on the rostrum. We thought we should not like to be harnessed, and though we have had one in our office closet for many years, we have never yet tried it on a patient. Many like them, but we prefer to leave the prospective mother as free as possible, and so let her change position when she desires, and be delivered on her side or back, as seems to her easier.

#### ATTENTION TO THE INFANT.

Sometimes delivery is accomplished before the physician arrives, and, in such a case, presence of mind and intelligence are often needed to save mother and child.

At such times, as soon as the head appears ascertain if the umbilical cord is about the neck; if so, loosen and slip it off, allow air to the face, and see that the mouth and nose are free from mucus.

As soon as the child is born lay it on the right side, away from the discharge; see that it breathes freely; if it does not, sprinkle cold water upon the chest and blow in its face. If it looks purple, and the action of the heart is irregular, keep it upon the right side, as this favors the closure of a valve in the heart which may not act perfectly at first.

When circulation and respiration are well established, tie the umbilical cord, about two inches from the body, with



---

linen bobbin or other small strong cord; apply a second, one inch from the first, and cut between the two.

#### REMOVAL OF THE AFTER-BIRTH.

Let the mother lie quiet and wait for the return of uterine contractions, to expel the placenta or after-birth.

If the uterus is tardy about finishing its work, gentle friction over the bowels will sometimes stimulate it to act. If the organ is duly contracted we shall feel a round ball about the size of a baby's head, which we may grasp and press gently. If pain comes on, the mother may hold her breath and bear down, or make an expulsive effort. With one hand grasping the uterus through the abdominal walls, with the other, gentle traction upon the cord may be made while the pains continue, not after. Any strong effort may sunder the cord or invert the uterus, hence all effort of this sort must be made with great care.

If the pains return after a little rest, there is not much danger of hemorrhage; but in case they do not, flooding is likely to ensue. Should this occur, apply cold compresses, or, better still, ice-water over the bowels. If this does not check it, rub ice across the lower part of the abdomen and carry small pieces up within the vagina.

This is the period of the most peril in the process of delivery, because the patient in a few minutes will be greatly prostrated, perhaps die from the loss of blood. In all cases there is danger of fatal flooding so long as the after-birth remains, whether the case be one of abortion, premature delivery, or confinement at full term. The uninitiated often



think all trouble is over when the baby is born, whereas in some cases it has just begun. Where labor is hurried, there is more danger of flooding than when it has been slowly accomplished.

#### UTERINE HEMORRHAGE.

Occasionally, when the after-birth has been removed and the uterus once well contracted, it will relax and hemorrhage ensue. Hence, if the patient is feeble, if the delivery has been very rapid, or so protracted as to be exhausting, it is well for physician or nurse to keep an eye on the patient. The mouth of the uterus may be closed by coagula and internal flooding going on, or it may be external, and the patient lie weak and faint and not notice the flow.

This accident sometimes occurs after the physician has left, thinking the patient past all peril, and has been recalled to find the bright face blanched, the eye dim, the ear dull. Several times I have been called to such a scene, where there had been no physician in attendance, or where he had left, supposing all danger passed. Many times I have introduced my hand and removed the after-birth, or the coagula (clots of blood), with which the uterus was filled, applied ice to stimulate uterine contraction, fed the patient brandy and bits of ice, as the stomach had strength to bear, and watched the slow return of the pulse with an agony of anxiety which I wished I might never again experience.

I write thus fully from the fact that in so many instances the friends were deluded with the idea that the patient was



---

doing well, because she seemed so perfectly comfortable. Bleeding makes persons feel easy to the point of fainting—dying! I do not dwell on this point to do away with doctors in the “lying-in” chamber, but rather to impress you with the importance of having one at hand, and also, if you are caught in an emergency, that you may know what to do until you can secure professional aid. You would lack the skill and self-possession necessary to introduce the hand and peel off the after-birth, or empty the uterus of coagula, but in case of flooding you can easily apply ice within and without; or, for lack of this, cold compresses, changed from moment to moment, having two sets; or, if this fail, pour a stream of cold water from a pitcher over the bowels and externals and also give stimulants, and thus save blood and sustain life till a more skillful hand arrives. Remember that ice is best, if within your reach, because it is more efficient, and accomplishes its work without chilling the patient or wetting the bedding, as water applied in any other way necessarily would.



## AFTER DELIVERY.

---

THE pangs and perils of delivery being well passed, what shall we do to make our patient as comfortable as possible? Those who are accustomed to water treatment will readily apprehend our *modus operandi*. To the uninitiated, it may not seem quite as clear.

Premising that the bed has been duly protected by folded sheets, etc., we will first remove these, by drawing out and replacing them with dry ones, while the patient lies upon the back with limbs flexed, in which position the change can be easily made by raising the hips. Or, we may turn her to one side, remove and replace the sheets, and turn her on the back again. Next, adjust the girdle—the wet with a dry one over, as heretofore described, unless there be a sense of chilliness from exhaustion; if so, use only the dry bandage until reaction is well established. This should be pinned snugly and smoothly; not to make a small waist, but to support the abdominal muscles, which are at first left flaccid.

The sense of exhaustion, which is often described as “goneness,” is greatly relieved by a bandage. If the hip bones are prominent, so that the bandage does not support



---

the muscles, lay under several folds of linen. Usually, a bandage that can be worn until the middle of the fifth month will fit well after delivery. Next, place a bed-pan under the hips, and use a vaginal injection of a pint of tepid water, and, by means of a soft sponge or gentle stream, cleanse the parts. After this, place a small compress of wet linen over the externals, and over this the ordinary guard-napkin. The temperature of water for all these purposes may be about ninety-five degrees, unless there is a tendency to flow too profusely; then the water should be sixty-five or seventy degrees, or even ice-cold in case of hemorrhage. The wet girdle and wet compress are to be renewed as often as comfort requires.

While the patient is weak, the back should be supported by a pillow when resting on her side.

After a rest of some hours, or on the following day, give a sitz bath at ninety-five degrees, for five minutes. Put the bath tub close to the side of the bed, draw the patient forward to the edge of the same, raise her up gently, place her feet upon the floor, put a strong hand under each arm, and set her down in the tub, with a pillow at her back, a wet compress on her head, and her limbs covered with a blanket.

Let one attendant arrange the bed, while the other washes back and bowels, or combs her hair, as she may prefer. If feeble, the latter had better not be done while in the tub, until she has had a few baths; but when strong enough, it will be quite as good a place as the chair. Place a folded sheet on the edge of the bed, on which she can be placed



when taken out of the bath to be rubbed. It can afterward be drawn out when she is dry.

Very feeble patients can take a sitz bath with great comfort in this way, when they are not able to stand or sit up even to be dried. When this is done, the wet girdle and compress may be adjusted as at first.

One bath will be sufficient for the first day, or even several days, if the patient is feeble, changing the girdle and bathing the back as comfort requires. After this, two baths per day, for ten or fifteen minutes, gradually diminishing the temperature as it can be borne without being chilled, until sixty-five or seventy degrees are reached. The vaginal injection used once or twice a day is a valuable aid, and can be taken in the bath quite as well as with the bed-pan, soon as the patient feels strong enough to help herself to it.

#### AFTER-PAINS.

The "after-pains," as they are called, usually grow more and more severe with each confinement. Why the uterine contractions are painless after the first delivery, and painful after subsequent ones, I can not explain. Suffice it to say, if they continue for several days so as to be wearing, and prevent sleep, hot fomentations applied for a half hour will palliate and often bring perfect relief. If they are not sufficient, an injection of fifteen to twenty drops of laudanum in two or three table spoonfuls of water taken into the rectum to be retained, usually gives the desired freedom from pain.



## DIET.

As to food for the young mother, it should be very simple for the first few days: gruel, beef tea, panada, toast, fruit, graham mush, and cracked wheat. After the first week or ten days are passed the danger of fever is usually over; and she should be well nourished, for the uterine drain, and that from her breasts, tax her system so severely that she should be sustained by plain but nourishing food. So, to the above bill of fare may be added meat, eggs, and vegetables. We have seen sensitive persons prostrated, and with a tendency to a low nervous fever, simply from the exhaustion of nursing, where the appetite and digestion were impaired. Such should have fresh air, freedom from care, and food to them most appetizing and easy of digestion.



## CARE OF THE BREASTS.

---

**D**URING the first few days after delivery, usually about the third, there is a tendency to a chill, followed by fever and headache, called the "milk fever." When this occurs, it is often best to omit one bath.

During the cold stage, give a hot hand bath and a hot foot bath in the bed, or use hot bottles in place of them. The chill is usually followed by fever; when this appears, sponge off in water of a temperature which is pleasant, remembering that where there is a high fever there is usually a greater sensitiveness to cold, and we should never shock a delicate patient by water at a temperature not agreeable. Often bathing the head and hands, and changing the girdle, will be grateful when a general bath would invite a return of the chill.

Sometimes the fever is very slight, the cold stage being followed by perspiration; if so, let the patient lie well covered till the sweating is past, then sponge off quickly with tepid water, or alcohol and water, if she be feeble and feels prostrated.

When the circulation first tends toward the mammary glands, there is heat, fullness, and pain, usually, before much



milk is secreted. During this period, compresses of wet linen on the breasts, covered with dry cotton or flannel, will be grateful. Let them be as cool and changed as often as comfort requires.

When the inflammation runs high we use ice-water, but it is not often required if the first symptoms of heat and pain are promptly met. If the breast is still hard and painful, then foment with flannels wrung from boiling water, changing every five minutes for perhaps a half hour, two or three times a day, as the sensation indicates. During the intervals, continue the wet compresses.

Keep the breasts well drawn. If the baby does not do the work thoroughly, it should be done by the nurse or a pump. Gentle friction over them will facilitate the flow—though not hard enough to hurt, as that will increase inflammatory action.

#### ABSCESS.

What is called ague in the breast, which is supposed often to come from cold, arises usually from retained milk. That is, the breasts were not exhausted early enough, and distension of the milk ducts and inflammation ensue, which could have been overcome at one stage, but can not be at another, and so an abscess results from retained milk. Then days and nights of terrible pain follow before suppuration is sufficiently advanced to allow of relief by the lance.

We have had a few cases of scrofulous abscess after confinement, but never a milk abscess, though many times sorely threatened with such a misfortune by those who have had



such troubles at previous confinements. By prompt and energetic use of the means above suggested, we have succeeded in arresting the inflammatory action.

But, supposing we must have "a gathered breast," from any cause, what shall we do to "help on," as people say, "bringing it to a head?" Every one has some favorite poultice to prescribe. Which is best? The chief object of a poultice is warmth and moisture, and whatever retains the two longest with least discomfort to the patient is best. A friend of ours told us a story of her own experience, which illustrates the point. Her daughter had a severe scrofulous abscess of the breast; she used water-dressings, but the dear child suffered sorely. Neighbors began to advise poultices of different kinds. The patient wanted every new one tried. The faithful mother made poultice after poultice of all manner of roots, herbs, barks, and seeds, till she had not a clean dish, spider, or spoon in the pantry, and the bed and patient were about equally smeared, and still the breast was unrelieved. At this stage of affairs, the sick woman said, "Mother, I am thoroughly sick of all this stuff. The smell annoys me, and my breast aches just as bad; now, if you will wash me up, and change my clothing and the bed, and put on the clean wet compresses, I will never ask for another poultice."

When one has pain long unrelieved, it is natural to want to try something new, but often it proves an added discomfort.

For an abscess of any kind, our preference is water-dressings, of a temperature which, on trial, proves the most sooth-



---

ing. If there is a sense of dry, burning heat, folds of cool wet linen, frequently changed, are usually most grateful. If there is deep pain, hot fomentations at intervals are a relief. A bowl which will just fit over the breast may be half filled with tepid water, and the patient lean forward over it and thus bring it up quickly over the breast, and then lean back, holding it for ten or fifteen minutes, and it will prove a very grateful local bath.

Sometimes, to gratify the desire for something new, or to retain moisture for the night, we use poultices of flaxseed, slippery-elm, hop yeast, or bread and milk.

#### CARE OF THE NIPPLES.

When the nipple is sensitive, the dread of having the breasts drawn is such that they are allowed often to become too full, and inflammation is thereby induced. Besides this, an inflamed breast is likely to make the nipple over-sensitive, and so one trouble aggravates the other. If we are so unfortunate as to have a sore nipple, it is exceedingly difficult to cure it after confinement, because we can not give it time to get well. The friction prevents healing, and if we stop nursing an abscess ensues from retained milk. We have sometimes found a nipple-shield to be a great relief. One of these applied protects the sore surface from the child's mouth, and still allows the breast to be well drawn. But some babies will not use them, and some breasts will not give out their milk through this artificial appendage. If the symptoms correspond to those described in the chapter on Pregnancy, try those remedies first.



If there is tenderness and slight fissures, the following prescription, applied after nursing, soothes and serves well:

Borax.....	2 sc.
Glycerine.....	1 oz.
Rose-water.....	2 oz.

If there are deep fissures, with ulcerated edges, they may need to be brushed with a solution of nitrate of silver, by means of a camel's hair pencil drawn just within the crack, not on the healthy surface.

In all cases, there is usually a chance to try almost every thing before the nipple will get well, and the last remedy has the credit of cure.



## AFTER CONFINEMENT.

---

**A**MONG the troubles incident to the puerperal month, we find *phlegmatia dolens*, or milk-leg, so called because the ancients supposed, from the swelling of the limb and the suppression of the milk, that there was a transfer of the lacteal fluid from the breasts to the leg.

With high fever, from whatever source it may arise, there is a suspension of this secretion; and here is a coincident, not a cause. As to the nature of this disease, doctors differ; so we will not discuss the point, but pass on to those modes of relief which we have found efficient in removing this very painful affection.

Several ladies have come to us during confinement, because they had in previous years suffered from this disease and wished to avoid its recurrence. We apply hot fomentations to the painful part, or, if necessary, envelop the entire limb in a flannel sheet wrung out of boiling water by two pairs of strong hands, the flannel being laid in a strong cotton sheet and wrung by grasping the dry ends. This process may continue for a half hour or more, changing the sheet as often as it becomes cool, and repeating it three or four



times in twenty-four hours. During the interim keep the limb well packed in wet linen, covered with dry flannel, so as to be comfortably warm. Remove the packings, and wash off the limb in water at an agreeable temperature as often as comfort requires, and give gentle, dry friction after.

Among our early patients, we remember a lady who told us of her experience with milk-leg. The attack was very severe, and the doctor ordered calomel and salts every other day for a week, and then, being no better, calomel and salts *every day* for a week; and still she was the same, when an old lady advised that the limb be enveloped in cat skins. The animals were denuded hurriedly, and the skins applied promptly while warm. For this patient fifteen cats were slaughtered, and she reported herself greatly relieved by the process. We have never tried it, as we prefer warm flannels to warm cat skins, and have thus far found them adequate to such emergencies.

#### HEMORRHOIDS.

Hemorrhoidal tumors, or piles, are often inflamed, and sometimes seem to be induced by tedious labor. If there is sensitiveness, swelling, and pain about the anus, warm fomentations applied frequently, or constantly if comfort requires, will allay the inflammation. A compress of wet linen will often suffice, to which we may add a few drops of laudanum, if there is much pain. But if we wish to prevent or cure this troublesome infirmity, we must avoid drastic cathartics or straining at stool. Many cases of prolapsus



---

uteri and prolapsus ani have been induced by powerful medicines, which bring on forcing pains, or by long sitting and much effort to evacuate the bowels while the parts are weak. Unless the movements are perfectly easy and painless, we always advise enemas for at least a month or six weeks after delivery. A pint of tepid water injected into the bowels every morning after breakfast will usually secure a comfortable action. Occasionally the bowels lack proper peristaltic motion, and may require a quart or two to prompt them to expel. In such cases, gentle friction over the abdomen—a sort of quick, vibrating motion by an attendant, after the enema has been given, will be a good stimulant to sluggish bowels. The deep kneading and heavy friction given at other times for constipation should not be used during the first month after delivery, as the uterus might be irritated thereby.

If there is sensitiveness about the anus, or tumors, the tube of the syringe should be oiled, and carefully introduced while the patient lies on the left side. The attendant should pump slowly, and change the direction of the tube slightly, if pain is induced by the force of the stream.

If there is discomfort after an evacuation, inject half a pint or less of mucilage made of flax-seed or slippery-elm bark, to be retained; or if these are not at hand, tepid water will serve very well. If the pain is severe, ten or twenty drops of laudanum may be added to the mucilage.



## LOCAL INFLAMMATION.

We have just been treating a case of chronic inflammation of the rectum. The lady has been suffering severely from the affection since her confinement, six months ago. Simple means would have saved her all this suffering, or, at least, have arrested the disease in its acute stage.

Within the last twenty years we have seen a multitude of cases of local inflammation, which ought to have been cured during the first few weeks after delivery, instead of going on for months, more frequently for years. In many of them the congestion or irritation incident to labor was not allayed at the time, and chronic disease was the result.

Scores of sick women have said to me, "I have not seen a well day since the birth of my first child;" perchance years since—often from five to fifteen years of invalidism had been endured. Many of them were suffering from chronic inflammation of the uterus, vagina, and vulva, which made the duties of wife and mother exceedingly painful, and, indeed, unfitted them for the enjoyment of any labor or pleasure. I have seen many who had been suffering from an exhausting discharge ever after, who supposed it to be the necessary sequel of maternity. For further hints on this subject see chapter on Leucorrhœa.

The discomforts following delivery should pass away during the subsequent month. If they run beyond this they assume a chronic form, and are not likely to vanish spontaneously after that period.



## TONIC TREATMENT.

The lochial discharge, which reduces the uterus to its former size, continues about four weeks; though in cases of debility or disease it is prolonged and gives the patient a sense of prostration, which nothing can relieve while it continues.

The sitz baths, two a day for ten or fifteen minutes, gradually reduced from week to week to seventy degrees, or even sixty degrees, should be kept up during the month; also the wet girdle and vaginal injections. If, at the end of this time, the patient feels strong and the discharge has ceased, they may be discontinued. But if, unfortunately, the back is still weak, the abdominal muscles relaxed, and there is a slight flow tinged with red, then the treatment should be continued, making the baths as cool as can be borne, and a good reaction established after. Besides a vaginal injection in the sitz bath, those of alum-water, or of tannin, should be used. If the abdomen is pendulous, a bias girdle should be worn—gored so as to fit and support it. Friction and kneading over the bowels, also deep inspiration and expiration, to induce tonic contraction of the abdominal muscles, should be resorted to.

## HOW LONG THE PATIENT MUST LIE IN BED.

The question is often asked, How soon can a woman sit up or walk about after confinement? and it is one to which we can give no definite answer. To illustrate this point I will give an incident which has occurred since I began



to write this chapter. A lady, once a medical student of ours, now the wife of a farmer living near us, took an early start one Monday morning for our Cure. She packed her trunk, put the cream in the churn, helped with the family breakfast, planned the work for the week, rode five miles in an ordinary farm-wagon, and before 2 P. M. of the same day had a nine-pound baby. In a few days she dressed her baby, walked to the bath room; rode out at the end of a week, and now, at the close of two weeks, returns to her country home.

The state of health and pursuits of a pregnant woman have much to do with the easy delivery and the good "getting up" after. The case of the lady above alluded to illustrates this point. Her first child was born before she had rallied from the effects of hard study and teaching, and it was weeks, or rather months, before she was well. The three born subsequent to her quiet life and the active duties incident to the farm, have been much less tax on her constitution, and in every case she has been able to remain at her post of labor till near the time of her delivery, and return to it in two weeks after.

Missionaries tell me that native women, in all cases of ordinary labor, get up in a few hours after, wash themselves and their infants, and in a few days attend to their ordinary duties; but that these same native women, when they become christianized and take to civilized employments, grow feeble, have tedious labors, and get up slowly. I suppose this unfortunate change is not the result of their new spiritual life, but of the difference in their muscular



---

system. With the change in their religion comes a change in their occupation. Christian husbands excuse them from out-door labor, and they resort to sedentary habits, books, and the needle, and thus lose the stout form, the strong muscles which make child-bearing easy, and a quick return to ordinary health almost certain.

Some are as able to be up the next day as others the next week, and some are not as strong at the end of thirty days as others are at seven. Our rule is to let the patient sit up and move about the room when she wishes. If all tendency to febrile action is allayed by baths and bandages, and she is not excited by company or family care, she will know when to rest and when to move about moderately. We are speaking now of sane, sensible women, *not* of those foolish, fidgety ones who, sick or well, want to do every thing they ought not, and nothing that they should.

On this point, of sitting up so soon after delivery, we differ from many personal friends in the profession, whom we highly respect, and still we have proved our theory by more than twenty years experience, having treated hundreds of cases in the manner described, without harm, but rather with positive benefit. Indeed, many of them had repeatedly tried the old method of lying in bed for days and for weeks, and still had not had a good "getting up." Under water treatment, they found themselves stronger at the end of one month, than at previous confinements under other treatment, after three or four months had passed.

Our observations on this point have been among invalids,



or those of feeble organization, more than among any other class; they who, not having done well at home, wished to try a new course, and so came to us to stay during confinement. Often, those who have been previously treated for some severe uterine disease come back to us for confinement, lest the old infirmity should return.

Remember that one may sit up for five or fifteen minutes in a sitz bath and be refreshed, when an hour or so in a rocking-chair would weary.

The sitz tub for a sick room should have a high back, which will allow of a pillow; in the absence of such an one, an attendant should stand behind and give the needed support.

The bath cleanses, cools, and favors the tonic contraction of all relaxed muscles. If the abdomen is large and pendulous, it is well to have a bandage nicely adjusted before going into the bath, during the first few times of getting up after confinement, and this will also serve for the wet girdle when out.

Though we never intended to make our home for chronic invalids a "lying-in hospital," many of our patients who have suffered much from disease or debility during pregnancy, and after delivery, have desired to pass this probation with us, and we have been both surprised and delighted to note the efficacy of these baths and bandages.

Ladies from the town, who are pretty well, come in on the week of their delivery, occasionally not until the very day. Those who are feeble in health spend a month or two before confinement, and then return to their homes -



often hundreds of miles distant—in from two to four weeks afterward. Of course, the length of time must vary according to the recuperative powers of the patient.

From much observation in cases like the above, it has become my opinion that women lose rather than gain strength by remaining long in bed or room; that the change of position, the tonic influence of the bath, the short ride in the easy carriage, or airing on the verandah, improves appetite and digestion, quiets the nervous system, and invites sleep.

The fear that standing on the feet will induce prolapsus, leads many a one to do what is much harder—sit up in bed in a very trying position for the spine and pelvic organs. Of course, very feeble persons may have the shoulders raised by pillows, or by the back of a chair turned down and covered with pillows; but if they are really able to sit up, let them have a good chair.

To stand up, or to walk across the room, with shoulders thrown back, will relieve pain in the chest, loins, and limbs which are incident to long lying in bed. As to the uterus, it will bear either much better than long sitting or much baby-tending while weak.

#### IMPORTANCE OF QUIET AFTER CONFINEMENT.

By quiet, we mean rather the mental than physical condition. If the young wife is not worried with her family responsibilities, or, worse still, with visitors, she will eat, sleep, rest, rejoice in her safe delivery, be glad in her baby, and with plenty of fresh air, good water, clean clothes, and



judicious nursing, gain from day to day, and by her own sensations know when to sit up and when to walk about.

But a sensitive woman, with her heart full of the new and exquisite delight of motherhood, whose nerves have been put to a stretch before unknown; who has been kept cuddled up and cooked in a close room, without bathing, and with secretions which must sicken if unremoved; who has received the calls and congratulations prompted by curiosity and ceremony, and if she does not get the fidgets, or some worse malady, then she is most surely made of firmer fiber than most women. An amount of mischief is often done during these days which months can not mend.

Much sleep is very important during the first few days. For want of it, many a patient has had puerperal convulsions or puerperal mania. Nature makes haste to repair every strain on the nervous system by sleep, if all else is favorable. To prevent the mother from being unnecessarily disturbed, have the baby removed from her at night, if she has no milk.

The husband, nurse, and some family friend are company enough with "the new comer," until the mother is able to sit up, walk about, and ride out. Our family are often surprised to see the new mother out riding before her door is open to general calls. Perhaps one reason why our patients endure muscular exercise so well so soon after delivery, is because they are comparatively free from mental excitement. Indeed, many of them say, "My freedom from social and domestic responsibility allows me so much more rest than I can have at home, that I do nothing but eat, sleep, and grow



---

strong every day." I mention this to prompt ladies in towns to cut loose from company during the convalescence after confinement.

Do not have the maid running to your chamber with visitor's cards, and you perplexed whether to receive or reject company, and thus be made so wide awake that you miss your nap even if you decline the visit; or, if you receive it, you are then too tired to be benefited by a bath. Let the girl who answers the door-bell be empowered by your husband or family physician to decline calls.



## BATHING OF BABIES.

---

SOON as the little one can be removed from the mother, wrap it warmly, and keep it well covered till ready for washing and dressing. Let it lie upon the right side. Look at it occasionally to see that it is breathing well, and that there is no bleeding from the umbilical cord, which sometimes occurs.

As to the temperature of the first bath, we make it about ninety-eight degrees, or blood heat, so that there shall be no shock, no sense that this is a cold world. We know that Indian women wash their infants in the nearest stream; but as we are not writing for the squaw, and as the baby we are considering is not a papoose, we propose the plan which has long proved safe in our institution, rather than one untried.

A large washbowl will serve very well, if there is no tub for babies at hand. While the little one lies on the lap, wash the face and head thoroughly with fine sponge or soft flannel, then if there is any of the white adhesive paste usual on the body, smear it with sweet oil and rub softly with fine soap. This being removed, lay it gently in the



---

bath up to the chin, supporting the head and back with one hand while washing it with the other. When this is well done, lay it on a soft towel spread on the lap, wrap it about the child, and wipe dry. Let all this be done in a warm room.

Sometimes the physician or the professional nurse, after washing the face, prefers to wipe the body off with sweet oil or lard, without bathing, and says that it leaves the delicate skin in a more healthful condition, and prevents taking cold from the evaporation of the water. To this method we know no objection, only, with our water proclivities, we prefer the washing after anointing with oil.

The umbilical cord should be wrapped in several thicknesses of soft linen, by passing it through a hole in the same and then folding it over, so as to protect the person and clothing. This need not be removed until the surface is healed, but if wet occasionally, will allay irritation. Within a week this will be accomplished, but the surface will be sensitive, and a little piece of soft linen moistened with sweet oil may be applied. Or, if there is a slight oozing of the blood, as is often the case, sprinkle the surface with a little tannin or burnt alum after the daily bath.

Soon as the infant is dressed, give it a teaspoonful of cool water to drink. If it seems stomach-sick and inclined to vomit, then give tepid water, which will aid in throwing off mucus, which often disturbs it at intervals for several hours after its advent into a new world. See that the feet and hands are warm. If it is difficult to keep them so, let some one hold the baby, with its tiny feet grasped in one hand



and its hands in the other. There seems to be a vital force imparted by human warmth, to which sensitive ones are particularly susceptible.

There are sundry little ways of keeping baby clean and comfortable, which depend more upon tact than time or means: for instance, two soft sponges always at hand, one to be used about the face, and one for other parts of the body. These, wet, will cleanse without irritation. Powdered starch is good to protect sensitive surfaces, but if the skin becomes denuded, or red and irritable, then smear the surface with sweet oil, arnica oil, cold cream, or something of that kind.

When wet diapers are removed, they may be immediately dropped in cold water, and afterward rinsed and dried. This will prevent the odor in the rooms, and the cloths will be nearly as clean as if they had been washed and boiled, if they are put in water before being allowed to dry.

When the infant is undressed for the night, rub it gently with the hand; let it lie upon the lap before the fire and take a good air bath, exercising the limbs unfettered by clothing. Do this also after a bath, to secure a good reaction; or if the room be cool, or the little one is inclined to be blue, then wrap it in a woolen blanket for a half hour or so before dressing.

As to the temperature of baths during babyhood, begin as we said, at ninety-eight degrees, and from week to week gradually reduce it as they will bear and enjoy. We say *enjoy*, for, as a rule, babies ought not to cry when they are bathed, and seldom will, if it is done with due discretion.



---

Very few like being washed all over with a cloth, but a dip in a bath, or remaining in for about a minute and being rubbed, is usually enjoyed, unless the little one has been scared by water too hot or too cold for comfort. One bath a day is sufficient. If the infant is delicate, two or three times a week is better for the first few weeks. Let this be done during the first part of the day. If baby is restless at evening, or has an eruption on the skin, then a second bath may be given. During the first year they will, from habit, enjoy baths at seventy or eighty degrees, according to their reactive power.

I well remember setting down my baby bath-tub of cold water in midwinter, while I went for hot water to add. When I came back, my little boy had crept to the tub, climbed in and sat down, with a slight shiver and look of surprise, but no outcry.



## DRESS OF INFANTS.

---

ON referring to "The Water Cure Journal" of November, 1851, I find what I there wrote on this subject is what I would say now. With all the fashions which have come and gone in the last twenty years, I have seen no better way to clothe babies, hence I reprint what I then wrote.

Of an infant it is emphatically true, that it is *most* adorned when unadorned. What sight more beautiful than the happy freedom of a child in its night-dress, or even in no dress, taking an air bath. So prone are we to estimate garments by their cost, rather than their comfort; to measure beauty by the stitches taken in making, rather than their adaptation to the wants of the body, that the little folks suffer in many ways, if not in the same ways as their seniors.

The harm done them by this foolish vanity or misplaced pride is often of a date prior to that of their birth. Many a prospective mother spends all her leisure in tucking, embroidering, affixing edgings, insertings, and the like. To say nothing of the unfavorable effect of sedentary habits on her own health, her offspring have less mental and muscular power than if she worked, walked, read and thought more.



---

After all the labor to prepare their little garments, they seem to me as ill adjusted to the wants of their tiny frames. I fancy they often "cry out" against them, and we misinterpret their language, and think they complain of colic, of hunger, when they mean to say "*pinched! pricked!*"

Many a crying child is fed with pap, anise-seed, or catnip, when merely the allowing it the free use of its lungs and limbs, by removing its clothes, would have put to flight every sign of pain or peevishness, and the little one would have laughingly performed a series of varied and beautiful gymnastic exercises for the development of its physical system.

#### TIGHT DRESSING.

Taking every woman at her word, no one ever dresses *herself* or children otherwise than "*very loosely.*" For her infant she just has them snug enough to stay up in place and furnish a support to the back, and keep it from growing crooked, and prevent the stomach from growing too "high" and large—that is, the abdomen; only that important part has lost its name, as well as place, in woman's form.

Now the tightness is pretty *tight*, when this is done so as to suit the idea of most mothers.

In foetal life the vital organs are most developed. Hence, in infancy the head and chest are larger, in proportion to the hips, than in the adult. For this reason, the bands to skirts, unless suspended from the shoulder, must be pinned snugly, otherwise they will slip down, the lower part of the trunk being so much smaller than the upper.



The practice of enveloping our little ones in a series of firm bands for several months, seems to me a remnant of the days of swaddling-cloths. But, as we do not use the salt to which the Prophet alludes, and as we wash and dress our babies every day, instead of letting them lie swathed and salted for seven days, it seems to me best to devise some way of dispatching the business so that they will enjoy it.

A lady once said to me, "Your baby seems to take washing and dressing as one of the pleasures of life;" to which I replied, "And why should she not?" "But," she added, "I should be afraid she would grow out of shape, her clothes are so loose."

Kittens, colts, and lambs are not bound up, and why should babies be, unless they are deformed?

The wearing of several folds of unyielding cloth tightly about the body of an infant, to keep it from growing awry, before you have any evidence of its tendency to do so, seems altogether premature. About as consistent *this* as to subject children to the extensors, elevators, depressors, and compressors of an Orthopedic institution, in fear that they would have spinal curvature or some other deformity. To be sure, some weak, scrofulous, rickety children grow out of due proportion, and some mechanical fixtures or certain exercises may be of use. So some heads grow too fast for the bodies to which they belong, and we might as well tie up all heads as all bodies to make them grow right. "Dame Nature," if allowed her own way, would do more things right "than are dreamt of in 'fashionable' philosophy."



---

Many mothers who are anxious to leave their infants sufficient breathing and growing room, slip their fingers under the inelastic bands as a test of tightness; when this can be done easily, they feel certain that they are "plenty loose." Such should remember that portions of the ribs, spine, and breast-bone are cartilaginous, not yet made into solid bone; that they yield to slight pressure, and if that pressure be permanent, assume a form correspondingly.

The lower ribs, called the false or floating ribs, are left free in front, so as to move outward and upward during inspiration. By compression they are often turned inward, thus diminishing the caliber of the chest; and, "as the twig is bent, the tree is inclined."

#### OUR FASHION.

As those who find fault with one way are supposed to *think*, at least that they have found a better, so I will gratify the wishes of my friends by telling them what, on trial, has seemed to me comfortable and convenient.

For a band next to the body we prefer one thickness of flannel, being more elastic, it will fit the form better than one of double linen, and is more easily adjusted. In ordinary cases this need be worn but a week or ten days. As to the little shirt, we never like those long straight strips which are always out of place, unless held in place by bands. A sack, with a fine cord at the neck, which can be drawn up or out, as the size may require, is preferable. Those of knit worsted are very nice, but in their lack, make them of fine cotton; linen is too cool for our climate.



For protection, oil-silk, or rubber-cloth, used about the nips is nice when going out, but if worn constantly keep the parts too warm, and is liable to induce irritation. Unbleached factory is nearly water-proof, and adjusted over the ordinary napkin is a very good substitute for the articles above named. Next, the foot-blanket, as it is called, should be a width of flannel, three-fourths of a yard in length, plaited at the top and bound with a broad tape, so as to tie about the hips just above the napkin. Thus adjusted, it is easily removed if soiled.

As to the petticoat, we always considered those broad, unyielding bands a tax on the patience of the nurse, and a discomfort to the baby. To put pins through the fine, firm muslin, so that they will not scratch you or the baby, and have the band just tight enough to keep in place, and not too tight for the baby's comfort—to do all this, while the victim cries and the mother worries, requires more skill than for a surgeon to dress a wound, especially if his subject has taken chloroform. I have often heard ladies say the bands in which babies are bound were a bother, but then what should they use? Let the skirt be gored, making the top half the size of the bottom. Lay plaits at the back and front, and bind with flannel-ribbon; make a little arm-size and shoulder-strap of the same. The plaits may be stitched down four or five inches, so as to fit the form loosely. Tie this behind, at the top and three inches below. If the baby is restless or has the colic, you can, without undressing it, carry the hand up under the clothing and rub the back, or stomach and bowels, to its great relief.



---

The one band need not be retained after the navel is healed, if all is right in that region. If not, then the surgeon should advise what must be worn. Those cases of hernia or breach which we have seen were not where the bands had been removed, but where retained and adjusted with anxiety. Feeble infants when crying need to have the bowels supported by gentle pressure from an intelligent hand. This will do more to prevent hernia than any band.

The feet should not be kept closely wrapped in long clothes, but left free to kick as much as they please; it being their best method to develop the limbs. If the feet are cold, it is better to put on socks than to keep them fettered.

As to dresses with high necks and long sleeves, I need not advise those, because they are just in the fashion, good sense and good style being now in "sweet accord."

Besides these, there have been added within twenty years the flannel sacks and double gowns, which are pretty and comfortable for cool weather—much better than the blanket, which affords no freedom for the arms, being first up about the shoulders, and then all off; thus, when used for common wear, *causing* colds rather than preventing them. If the morning or evening is cool even in midsummer, the sack or double gown should be put on, as a chill at this season is especially liable to induce cholera infantum.

Bare arms and bare feet may be enjoyed in the heat of the day. We know that genteel dressing allows the former and forbids the latter. Why, we do not know, for there is



no shoe half so pretty as a plump little foot. Many consider the shoe necessary to prevent the foot from growing too large; but, used for this purpose, what do we better than the Chinese? Their standard of littleness is some sizes less than ours, but the principle is the same. The feet as well as the features should, as to size, suit the form. A large body with small waist or small foot, to the artist and the anatomist, lack harmony.

Constant care should be taken to keep infants warm, for their power to generate heat is small during the first months. By this we do not mean that they should live in a hot room, but rather that their clothing should be such that they may be comfortable, and still have the air they breathe pure, both by night and by day.

When the young mother complains of lack of strength, because she keeps her room so warm for the baby, we know there is a lack of intelligent tact somewhere, for mothers and babies were intended to thrive together. We have pleasant memories of a baby born in December, who was never out of bed for a single night, and for whom an extra fire was never kept until the scarlet fever came. Of course, if the little one is sick, or has to be fed, then a warmer room is required, and flannel night-gowns or over-sacks should be used. Infants sleep better at night and fall into regular habits of nursing easily, if there is neither fire or light at night, as a usual rule.



## NURSING.

---

IF the mother is usually strong, soon as she has rallied from the sense of exhaustion subsequent upon labor, and the baby is rested after its first bath, it may be put to the breast. Should the nipple be flat or retracted, from lack of attention advised in a preceding chapter, it can now be drawn out with a breast-pump, suction by means of a common clay-pipe, or by the mouth of an attendant.

To encourage the little one to try, we may moisten the nipple with milk or sprinkle it with sugar. If we delay all this till the breasts are filling, and the baby has used the spoon several days, it will be still more difficult to induce it to seize the sunken nipple. Both forethought and tact are necessary in such cases, so as not to weary the mother with ineffectual attempts at nursing.

### REGULARITY AS TO TIME OF NURSING.

At first let the interval be from two to three hours during the day, when the babe is awake, of course; if it sleeps, never wake it to eat, when well. If it has a long sleep without food, and then is awake longer than usual, it needs



to nurse oftener than otherwise. It is particularly important that the child forms the habit of nursing only once or twice during the night. If more than this, the mother gets too little sleep, and the baby too much to eat. Sleeping with the infant on the arm, is wearisome for the mother, and prompts it to nurse oftener than it would if put aside in the bed or crib, as soon as its want is satisfied. It sometimes requires a little tact and positiveness to establish this method, but it is of great advantage to both parties. If the mother is able to furnish a good supply, she will have little trouble in forming regular habits of nursing, the time being gradually prolonged to four and five hours during the day as it grows older.

But with many the milk is poor in quality, the quantity small, and though the little one seems satisfied at the time of nursing, it soon "cries for more." In such cases it should be fed once or twice in the twenty-four hours and let the mother accumulate, not mix feeding and nursing at the same meal, for then it is apt to get too much. Micawber said of the twins, "They no longer draw their nourishment from the maternal fountains, but are supplied from foreign resources." Our American babies have to turn to "foreign resources" very early, and some of them hold on to the "maternal fountains" long after the healthful flow has ceased.

#### CAUTION TO NURSING MOTHERS.

The suction stimulates the mammary glands to secrete, even when the system is being unhealthfully impoverished



---

thereby. In such cases, it is bad for both mother and child. The little one can not long thrive, when the mother is failing in health. Our American women do not endure nursing as well as those of other nations, as a general rule. Sometimes the secretion is insufficient, at others abundant but the mother fails in health thereby. When either of these phases occur during the first few weeks, we may hope, with attention to diet, and freedom from care, that after the uterine drain incident to the first month or six weeks has passed, she will be able to meet this pleasant duty.

If the flow of milk be scanty, give her some of the varied preparations of chocolate or cocoa, oat-meal or wheat-meal gruel, whichever she likes best. If the secretion be excessive and exhausting, then avoid all warm drinks, let her have plenty of beefsteak, boiled eggs, and dry toast. Some bitter tonic may be of advantage, a mild preparation of iron, perhaps the muriate tincture, five to fifteen drops three times a day. If a tendency to profuse perspiration exists, as is usual in such cases, bathe in salt and water, or use one part of whisky or alcohol to two parts water.

Within a month or two, if she does not gain decidedly and permanently, wean the baby, else you lose the mother, or make of her a chronic invalid hard to cure. Among the many sick women who have come under our care, we number as most difficult to cure, those who have been reduced by prolonged nursing. The nutritive process seems so much impaired, that it is difficult for them to rally and restore exhausted energies. There are some women habitually feeble,



who nurse their children without exhaustion, but whose children do not thrive. They are pallid, or blue, with a soft flabby fiber, and seem starved. In such cases the milk is evidently of poor quality. If beef and iron do not improve the milk, wean the baby.

The position of the mother during nursing is important. Sitting up in the bed is bad, as it gives back-ache and a sense of "bearing down," as it is called, tires the shoulders and invites a stoop. It is always easier every way to lie down, or sit up in a chair, which supports well the back and shoulders. Many young wives get a stoop, a pain in the chest, from which they are slow to recover, by tending the baby too much when they are weak, nursing when they are not able, or in a position above alluded to.



## WEANING.

---

THE condition of mother or child will indicate the time for weaning. So long as they both thrive, let them live this sweetly united life. But, as soon as the mother finds nursing a tax, has pain between the shoulders after it, feels weak, wakes in the morning more tired than at night, it is time to turn the little one to other "resources." Nursing during pregnancy is bad for the mother and for the born and unborn child, and is also liable to induce an abortion.

Conception rarely takes place before the menses has returned, though we have seen a few instances of this class. Usually when menstruation is established it is time to wean the baby. Sometimes the monthly flow continues regular during the whole period of lactation. In such cases the mother is not as strong, the child does not thrive as well, and early weaning is usually advisable. Many mothers, in their desire to give themselves for the sake of their children, continue nursing at the expense of their own health. Such do not realize that their failing powers makes the nourishment imparted of an inferior quality. The general rule



holds good, here as elsewhere, that when the mother does the best she can for her own health, she is doing the best for those she loves.

As to the time of weaning, we prefer spring and early summer, or autumn. Midsummer, when "bowel complaints" are common, is more trying for the child, and the long nights of midwinter renders the ordeal more severe for both parties.

As to "the time in the moon!"—for this I have no advice to give. In my childhood, I used to look at the first page in the almanac, with reference to the signs, and though I always found the same forlorn man there, surrounded by animals, with lines from them straight into him, still I was never able to learn from it when the sign was right for weaning babies, sowing onions, or planting corn. As I grew older, and studied "The Geography of the Heavens," and found these characters stood for constellations, I expected light on this mysterious question, but it never came, and hence I long ago decided that Astrology was beyond my comprehension, and so have looked to Physiology for light *when* to wean babies, and thus far have had little trouble.

As a preparation for change in the bill of fare, feed them during the day, for a week or two, and let them nurse during the night, and thus grow accustomed to the change of diet. After the baby is weaned, draw the breasts what is necessary to keep them comfortable, and thus the secretion will gradually diminish. If there is heat in the breasts, keep on the wet compress. This is better for the mother



---

than putting on camphor or other remedies, to arrest the secretion of milk suddenly.

Suggestions in regard to the food to be used in case of early weaning will be found in the chapter on **Feeding of Infants.**



## FEEDING OF INFANTS.

---

WHEN infants must derive their nourishment entirely, or in part, from "foreign resources," what shall we give, and how shall it be given?

Here is an opportunity to write a volume, but as a good one has already been written by George Combe, we will refer to his work on Infancy.\*

For the benefit of those who have not his book, we will give a few suggestions from our own personal experience. If the mother is feeble after delivery, let her rest until the next day before putting her baby to the breast; and then if there is no milk, do not let her be worried by frequent efforts, but now and then let the infant try so as to encourage the flow and keep baby in practice. When the child needs nourishment before the supplies arrive (as is usually the case), give it first a little sweetened water, warm. After that, for subsequent meals, one-quarter milk and three quarters water, slightly sweetened.

The first milk of the mother is laxative, and will carry off

\* This work is for sale by WOOD & HOLBROOK, Nos. 13 & 15 Laight Street, New York City. Price \$1 25.



---

the tar-like excretions with which the bowels are loaded at birth, called meconium. An over-wise old lady said in reference to this, that "babies always needed physic to physic away the *economy*!" But the All-wise Father has provided for all this in the first nourishment from the mother, if she be able to do her duty; if not, then feed the little one with a spoonful or so of molasses and water.

If the "maternal fountains" prove permanently inadequate, how shall we supply the deficiency, by the spoon or bottle?

If by the latter method, we have the difficulty of keeping clean, and the danger of breaking, to subtract from the convenience of laying baby and bottle side by side, and leaving the attendant free. If we use cup and spoon, then an intelligent person is needed to feed slowly and with care, lest the little one eat too fast and too much. By sipping from the spoon, they early learn to take from the cup slowly, and thus the great trial of weaning from the bottle or breast is avoided. Some learn to feed much more easily than others, so the taste of the baby and convenience of the family must help to decide this important point.

The wind colic supposed to be induced by air "sucked in" with the spoon, is owing rather to gas generated by indigestion. Food improperly prepared, or given too frequently, too rapidly, or too much at a time, will disturb the stomach of these sensitive ones, and what is called wind colic often ensues.

A common bottle, with a sponge of very fine texture for a cork, will serve for a baby-bottle, and is easily kept



clean, but requires a hand to hold it, while one with a long rubber tube can be laid in the crib beside the baby, but is kept sweet with more difficulty.

#### WET-NURSES.

About wet-nurses, we have nothing of value to say, because so few honest women serve in that capacity.

If we had a woman with a good body, and a good spirit ready to serve thus, we might consider the matter favorably, but not otherwise. On the trials of mothers, and the sorrows of babies, when both are at the mercy of a bad woman, we will not dwell.

We prefer to trust our little ones to a good cow, rather than a bad woman. The first is not hard to find, and will usually serve the purpose, if intelligence, love, and leisure combine in the care of the child.

#### FOUNDLING HOSPITALS.

Many are afraid of cow's milk, because so few thrive in Foundling Hospitals and Orphan Asylums. To my mind, they do not die so often for want of breast-milk, nor for the milk of human *kindness*, as for the lack of human love.

Little ones draw comfort from the eye, the arms, the heart of a real motherly woman, whether she be their own mother or not, which helps them to thrive. Without this they are half dead while they yet live, as you can see by their sad, soul-starved faces.

A lady physician in Milwaukee, who for many years at



---

tended the sick in the Orphan's Home in that city, told me she had spent very many nights at the asylum, taking the poor motherless little ones in her arms to sleep, and thus saved their lives, when other means would have failed, for, she added, "it was not doctoring they needed, so much as cuddling, comforting, soothing." By this I do not mean to find fault with the managers or nurses at benevolent institutions. No hand however efficient, no heart however great, can meet the wants of a dozen babies, because each one needs a mother of its own.

Sisters of Charity have conferred with us as to food for foundlings, in view of the mortality in their flock, and though *they* thought it was owing to the milk, *we* thought the cows did their part the most perfectly of any concerned. Though they were neat, orderly, and devoted to their work, it was contrary to nature for any one woman to mother so many babies at once.

On Blackwell's Island we saw hundreds of babies in one institution, all depending on breast-milk—one woman to every two babies, and they were doing quite well considering their unfortunate parentage. The city supplies extra rations for the nurses, and their duty is to take care of their two babies, doing nothing beside. In this way more little lives are saved in that great sea of sin than could be done in any other way, because city air and city milk are bad for babies. Here on this island in East River, they have a fresh breeze always. Besides this, one nurse for two babies secures more personal care than can be given in ordinary foundling hospitals. Added to this, the nursing of a baby



prompts and quickens that emotion which is most nearly akin to motherly love, and so secures for the infant more tending, snuggling, and caressing than can be given in most asylums.

However, I am not writing for public institutions but private homes, and have merely considered this point to refute the impression that the mortality among these waifs without father or mother is owing chiefly to cow's milk. Of course, an intelligent, healthy, happy mother makes a paradise for infants, and the farther they drift from those belongings the nearer they come to purgatory, for this world; so near that the good Lord lets many of them through into the better land. But, suppose they are not born to this blessed estate, what next?

#### KINDS OF FOOD.

Get the best new milch-cow, and begin with one part milk to three parts water, for a week or two, gradually increasing the proportion of milk, as the stomach will bear. If the baby looks blue and seems hungry too frequently, increase the amount of milk. A small amount of white sugar, so slight as to be merely perceptible to the taste, should be added.

If the bowels are torpid, use brown sugar, or, if necessary, occasionally molasses. When much of the latter is used, acidity of the stomach is likely to be induced. If this does not suffice, graham gruel may be used, made thus: One table-spoonful of graham flour stirred in a little cold water, and poured into one pint of boiling water. Boil twenty



---

minutes, and stir while cooking. Add one pint of milk, but do *not* let it boil, unless the child has diarrhea. This keeps the bowels in a good condition, and the unbolted wheat supplies the bone and muscle-making material, so very important for delicate children.

Gruel of farina or oat-meal, *well* boiled, to which a little milk may be added, is also good, if the baby seems to need a different diet. It should be but slightly sweetened. If the gruel is to be given through the nursing-bottle, it will usually require straining.

When the child is thriving well, avoid change of diet. Many little stomachs are sorely tried by too many kinds, because one friend advises this and another that. Decide upon some course of feeding, and be careful to have it always prepared alike, and given at regular intervals; and go on thus, without there is an indication for a change.

Infants disturbed by some irritation of the stomach or bowels often seem hungry when they are not, and can be quieted by sipping freely of warm water, which has a happy effect in this, that it dilutes and helps to remove acrid secretions.

Babies often worry from thirst, and food is given instead of drink. Two or three teaspoonfuls of cold water will often satisfy, and thus delay their eating until the proper time. Those who live by the bottle, or the spoon, are likely to get more sugar and salt than those that are supplied from the breast, and hence are more thirsty.

If there is a tendency to diarrhea, boiled bread, arrow-root, and corn-starch, also unleavened bread, called Pass-



over or Jew bread, pulverized and boiled in milk, are good. If the drain from the bowels induces prostration, then weak beef-tea is best; but if the stomach will not retain nourishment, the beef-tea may be used in the form of injections. Little ones must be sustained, as they die from exhaustion much sooner than adults.



## INFANTINE DISEASES.

---

### WATER TREATMENT.

WATER treatment may be adapted to the wants of the weak and the strong, the young and the old. Packs, plunges, douches, all cold, were a peculiar feature of the Priessnitz method; hence, the name "cold-water cure" is very often applied where hot or tepid baths are largely used.

The temperature of the water may be so varied, and its uses so regulated, as to soothe the slightest or the severest fever, and relieve chills, creeping or congestive, whatever the age of the sufferer.

If the little one has a cold, let it be put in a warm bath up to the chin, as warm as its sensitive skin will allow, which will usually be about one hundred degrees; let the bath be five or ten minutes in duration and then be reduced to ninety degrees; then take out the little patient and rub it briskly. This should be done just before the nap, or on going to bed for the night, because, in either case, it is easier to keep the child warm, which is very important.



When there is a feverish heat about the body, apply bandages of very soft linen, two thicknesses, reaching from the armpits to the hips; over this put two folds of flannel or thick cotton. While this is warm, take care that the general surface of the body is not chilled thereby. To prevent this, put on a long sack or double gown. The bandage may be renewed during the night if the fever returns.

If the lips are dry, put a roll of wet linen to the mouth; or, if the gums are swollen, a small ball of pounded ice in a cloth for them to bite now and then will greatly soothe the little one.

In case of constipation or colic, an injection of water at ninety-eight degrees may be given, having a folded sheet or several napkins under the hips. As to the amount, judge from the indications; pump slowly, and as soon as there is an effort to expel on the part of the little patient, withdraw the tube.

If there is diarrhea, sitz baths are very beneficial, even to babies of a few months old. They will sit in a little tub or washbowl with the water from ninety-five to eighty-five degrees, according to the strength and reactive power of the child, and have the back and bowels washed; the little patient enjoying it, even when quite feeble. The wet girdle, as above described, is of avail in such cases.

If there is griping or straining, injections of water at ninety-eight degrees remove acrid matter and relieve inflammations. If this does not quiet the little one, we may give



---

an anodyne injection of five or ten drops of laudanum in a tablespoonful of starch-water. Immediately after, press a napkin over the anus for ten or fifteen minutes, so that it may be retained and absorbed.

Let the child live out of doors as much as possible; riding in a carriage, in the arms of a mother, is better for it than a baby wagon, when it is sick.

The daily bath for babies, when they are well, should be cool, ranging from ninety-five to seventy-five degrees, according to their reactive power; but when they are sick, the temperature should be modified to meet the symptoms, remembering that in fever the surface is more sensitive to cold; hence, baths and bandages should be warm enough not to shock the little patient, which does harm and makes it dread what it might enjoy.

We have had very sick children, whose parents feared they should have great trouble in giving them the water treatment, because they always cried when they were washed, but after the first few baths they began to enjoy them.

A little girl taken from the Orphan's Home was very sick with a cough and chronic diarrhea. Every thing in our bath rooms being strange to her, she screamed as soon as she entered, and went down into her warm bath as if she were descending into a fiery furnace or a freezing flood. But finding the water comfortable, she grew calm, and ever after begged for baths and bandages. When her daily fever came on she would say, "Me feel sick; please



give me bath ;” and when it was over, she would tell every one, “Me had nice bath ; me feel better now !”

Children who have grown up under water treatment will ask, when sick, for baths and bandages, their own sensations being often the best guide as to what they need.

A child in the bath is always a sweet picture, and especially a pleasant one when the brightening face says, as well as the words, “Me feel better now !”

#### OTHER TREATMENT.

By contrast, see the subject of pills and castor oil, lying in strong arms, the mother trying to hold the nostrils together and the tongue down, while she gives the pill which perhaps, after all, sticks between the teeth, or the oil which pours out of the mouth rather than in.

A gentleman who was partial to the Botanic system as it was at first practiced, with its large doses and crude remedies, said, when his child was sick he was obliged to call another doctor, as the child’s stomach would not hold all the remedies prescribed.

From slight experience, we judge it is very difficult to get any but Homœopathic remedies within reach of the stomachs of these little ones. Hence we know how glad mothers are of any remedial means which sick children will enjoy.

Water may be administered in various ways so as to be both pleasant and beneficial, even to these tender lambs.



---

But tact, intelligence, and experience must combine to render it a safe remedy. Arbitrary rules can never be a perfect guide for the care of sensitive ones. A wise head and a warm heart should temper the treatment.



## DISEASES OF CHILDREN.

---

MANY mothers have requested that my forthcoming book should give some suggestions in reference to the care of children. To dwell upon all their liabilities, and the directions for each, would require another volume. But I will try to give some hints, which may be of service to those who have already a good degree of Hydropathic and Hygienic intelligence.

First, bright children are liable to be brought forward too rapidly by being encouraged to "show off," for the amusement and admiration of their friends. When such are exposed to disease of any kind, they have not the power to resist or endure, which those possess with less activity of brain. They are more wakeful, more likely to have spasms and various nervous diseases. These bright little ones burn rapidly, die early, or live with such a sensitive organization as to suffer more than others. Such children should have very quiet surroundings, and be encouraged to sleep as much as possible. Avoid much excitement in their diversions. Do not entertain them with thrilling stories. The longer they live without learning to read the better. Let them



---

grow like little animals till their bodies are robust, and the result will be a better balance of brain-power.

#### TEETHING.

During teething there is a tendency to disturbance of the bowels or the brain. For the former, there are suggestions in the preceding chapter. To direct in reference to the latter is more difficult, but we will give a few hints.

If there is heat in the head, let the child sit once or twice per day in a warm bath, for five or ten minutes, having the head sponged with cool water during the time or have a little wet cap or linen napkin about the head, as the little patient may prefer. Give a pour at ninety degrees, or reduce the bath to about that temperature before taking out the child. Repeat the wet cap, or the head-washing, as often as the heat requires.

If there be twitching of the muscles, jerking of the limbs, it indicates great irritability of the nerves. A full warm bath will allay pain and quiet the system, and often prevent spasms. These symptoms are frequently induced by colic, hence an enema of warm water is always safe, and often serviceable.

In case of convulsions, put the patient in a full warm bath, with cold water to the head. Spasms are very likely to occur in sensitive children from stomach irritation. Hence great care should be taken that the food be given at proper intervals, and of such a quality that it may be easily digested.

I remember a college professor saying that he was once



called to a child in spasms, and that the mother said it had a "worm fit," but which he declared was a raisin fit; for, after an emetic, a large amount of undigested raisins appeared, to the great relief of the little patient.

The intelligent mother, who watches her child, can best judge what food, and how much should be given, for she knows what is well digested and on what it thrives. As a general rule, milk, farinaceous food, and ripe fruits, each in their season, are best for children.

The amount of unbolted wheat should be varied according to the state of the bowels. Cakes, pies, puddings, unless they are very simple, should not be used. Children brought up on plain, nourishing food will not, as a general rule, relish unwholesome compounds.

#### AFFECTIONS OF THE THROAT AND CHEST.

In case of colds, croup, and whooping cough, there are a few general directions which are good. Keep the extremities warm, the skin active, the bowels open, and supply an abundance of fresh air. A full warm bath on going to bed, hot as can be borne, with a pour after at eighty degrees, is always safe for diseases of this class.

If there is oppression of the chest, a wet bandage for the same of double linen, with one of dry cotton or flannel over, also double, made so as to fit the form and come up closely about the neck, is of great advantage. Also, a wet cloth about the throat, with a dry one over. These can be changed in the night, if they become dry and the heat of the body requires.



---

If there is a tight cough, hot fomentations for the chest once or twice during the day, and the chest bandage after, is valuable. The surface of these little ones is so sensitive that care should be taken not to burn them with the hot flannel, and, to guard against such a mishap, one thickness of linen should be laid over the chest during the fomentation.

Sometimes there is much heat of the body, while the limbs are cold. In that case a broad girdle or half pack may be used, also a hot foot bath, and rubbing the limbs with dry flannels after, to equalize the circulation.

For mumps or other glandular swellings about the neck, the wet bandage or warm fomentations on the part affected, are a relief. Meet the general indications of chill and fever as above described.

In cases of whooping cough, or catarrh, or colds, we find great benefit from out-door air, if the little one can ride in the arms of another, well wrapped, so as to keep the surface of the skin warm.

#### ERUPTIVE FEVER.

The premonitory symptoms of measles, chicken pox, and diseases of this class, are much the same, and a similar course of treatment is safe for each. First, there is chill and fever combined, with a general sense of pain and weariness. Warm baths for the chill and wet bandages or wet-sheet packs during the fever, are always good. The sensations of the chill are a pretty safe guide.

Let the baths and bandages be of a temperature which is



grateful to them. When the skin is hot it is exceedingly sensitive to cold. Hence wring the girdle or the sheet out of hot water, and adjust it as promptly as possible. The portion that the wet sheet covers should always depend on the extent of the feverish surface; often it is confined to the body only, while the limbs are cold. Sometimes the fever is constant, and the wet bandage or wet sheet should be used much of the time, renewing one or the other every two or four hours. In other cases, there will be fever only once or twice in twenty-four hours. Keep the surface warm, not hot, and the circulation equalized as nearly as possible.

These means, together with plenty of water to drink, taken frequently though not in large quantities at a time, simple nourishment, and fresh air, usually bring the little folks safely through this part of their experience.

The milder cases of diphtheria and scarlet fever are managed on the same general principles above described. But in the severer forms of these terrible scourges, there seems to be a peculiar poison which induces great depression of the life forces. In these sad instances, tonics, stimulants, and antiseptics, need to be added to the list of water appliances, and then often all means fail. As the attending physician can only decide when and what to use, I will not dwell upon the remedies.

#### DISEASES OF THE SKIN.

There are a great variety of diseases of the skin incident to growing children—sometimes the result of inheritance; in others they arise from bad diet, bad air, etc. It is



---

impossible in our limited space to describe each, or even to divide them into classes.

As of the acute eruptive diseases just mentioned, so also of the chronic class, there are general suggestions to be given. There may be a troublesome affection, because the condition of the stomach and bowels is bad. Hence we should first see that these organs perform their functions properly. If the skin is dry and rough, a full warm bath at night, for ten minutes, with a cool pour after, should be given.

If there are pimples, boils, or patches of ulceration, cover them on going to bed with soft wet linen, and put over this dry cotton or flannel, to keep the surface warm. If the compresses become dry at night and are a source of irritation, they can be removed or renewed, as symptoms may indicate. If the case is severe, the bandages should be used during the day, when the little one takes a nap, or even constantly if they be comfortably adjusted. If the child is old enough to take a wet pack every day, or two or three times a week, it will be found a valuable aid in all kinds of skin diseases.

The first result of water treatment is an increase of the eruption, as it brings impurities to the surface more rapidly; but if the child's habits are healthful, the cure will come after a time, though it may be weeks or months before it is accomplished.

The half-starved children of abject poverty are very liable to severe diseases of the skin, especially when they have a change to better fare. As they begin to gain in flesh, some disease of the skin is developed which is slow of cure. The



old and diseased material is being thrown off. On the contrary, those fed too rich food, which can not be well assimilated, are also liable to suffer in a similar way.

If the bowels or kidneys fail to do their work well, the skin is overburdened with waste material. In all forms of diseases of the skin, the diet should be very simple but nourishing. Wheat, unbolted, for bread, mush and gruel, also oat-meal, milk, and ripe fruits are excellent. If meat be used, let it be lean, and cooked without butter or rich gravies. No tea, coffee, pastry, or sweetmeats should be used.

The best way to purify the blood is to render the bowels, skin, and kidneys active, so as to throw off the diseased material while new and better is being made by fresh air, pure water, and good food.



## CHILDREN'S DRESS.

---

CORNELIA, daughter of Scipio, mother of the Gracchi, was once visited by a lady who displayed, with much pride, whatever was then most fashionable for ornament—gold, silver, diamonds, bracelets, pendants, and all the apparatus which the ancients called *mundum muliebrum* (woman's world).

The guest expected to find much of the same sort, but *still more* splendid, at the house of so important a personage, and therefore desired to see her toilet. Cornelia very artfully prolonged the conversation till her sons returned from school, and then, as they entered, said, "*See! here are my jewels!*"

Children, healthful, happy, well-bred, are indeed, to every true mother's heart, jewels more precious than any other; jewels to which no foreign gem can add beauty or worth. Thus endowed, they are always attractive. Without these, no dress, however elaborate and costly, can render them permanently pleasing.

Mothers, over-anxious about the dress of their children, lead them to feel that it is of more importance than body



or soul ; whereas, they should be impressed with the fact that tidy, pleasant, truthful ways are to be their chief charm. That, having these, they are always acceptable to friends or strangers. It is sad to see what should be a sweet young face, wearing a frown, or a tear, because the dress is not fashionable. Many a mother teaches, by precept and example, that the highest duty of life is to dress her family according to the most modern style.

Children are often so exquisitely attired that it is a wonder how they can be kept tidy in such delicate material. The mother must give her "whole mind to it," as the dandy said he did to the tying of his cravat. All this complex and delicate dressing restrains the little ones in their healthful sports.

I remember well the sweet little girl from the city, who wished herself a boy, that she might have a nice time playing, and not spoil her dress. She has gone now where "clean robes, white robes," cost no anxious care.

When health, convenience, and durability are consulted in the clothing of children, it greatly lessens the amount of nursing and washing in the family.

Such is our present style of dress for both sexes during their early years, that there is an unhealthful exposure of the lower limbs. The skirts are short and full, standing out from the person, so as to afford little protection below the hips ; and the limbs incased in but one thickness of cotton, that fine and thin, reaching but little below the knee ; and from thence to the ankle only a stocking, that often of fine texture. A man or woman who should go abroad in



---

midwinter dressed *thus*, would be thought to "dare death." When fashion sanctions such a suit, even for those who are still "in their tender years," can it be borne with impunity? Does not the fearful mortality among children show that there is "something wrong somewhere?" and may not the fault in part lie here? Colds, coughs, croup, and inflammation of the lungs are *frightfully* frequent during childhood. These diseases do not come from want of clothing about the chest, for enough and more than enough is usually worn there, but from the extremities not being well clothed. Fashion furnishes to boys a *firmer* fabric for their limbs much earlier than to girls; *they* have no alternative till their entrance into "teens" demands the long skirts.

Children should be clad with drawers, as well as dresses, of a material suitable for the season.

But I seem to hear one and another say, that our little misses would all look like young squaws clad thus. Well, be it so; they had much better, in cold weather, wear flannel than muslin; for of wool, it may in truth be said, "No matter if it is cold and wet, it is always warm and dry." Of this material we have now such a variety of goods of different textures, shades, and colors, that it would seem that *something might* be selected suitable to clothe the lower limbs of young girls and little children *every way* better than the "thin stuff" they now wear.

We might as well send our girls forth in the winds of winter clad in thin dresses as thin drawers. If those of muslin are desired, then drawers of woolen or cotton flannel should be worn under, coming down inside the stockings.



To prevent pressure of blood to the head, congestion of the throat and lungs or other internal organs, the inferior extremities must be kept warm.

Consistency in clothing is a jewel, most precious because of its rarity as well as real worth.



## CONFIDENTIAL TO MOTHERS.

---

I CAN not close my hints as to the care of children, without trying to prompt mothers to the closest supervision possible in reference to their personal habits. For the "olive-plants," which bless or blight our homes, there is seldom a lack of indulgent love, but often a want of intelligent guidance.

Between the nurse and the governess, day-school and Sunday-school, our children are so little under the mother's eye that often she knows very little of their true progress—of whither they are tending. No one can train children, without being where they are the greater share of their waking hours. They must be within reach of the eye or ear, without the necessity of going to look or listen.

Children are shut up in the nursery, and young misses are banished early to boarding schools, which makes too broad a breach between them and their mother during their impressionable years. To be sure, out of this class some grow up good, but many more get blemishes on body and spirit that no after culture can efface.

Little ones are often given up to the care of a servant



with whom the lady of the house would not trust her family silver. At all ages we are more or less marked by the company we keep, but mostly during the tender, growing years. Not only coarse ways, coarse words, but impure associations are often implanted, which no after religious teaching can perfectly eradicate. On this point I speak what I *know*, not a mere theory, but a conviction, which is the result of personal confession on the part of others.

Secret sin is often begun in the nursery, or at school, and carried on until the victim becomes insane, imbecile, epileptic, or suffers from some other very disagreeable nervous affection. Many young men with broken health, minds impaired, and life prospects that once were bright but now blighted by this terrible sin against the body, have consulted my husband.

Young women are not as often led astray, *or* are less ready to confess their sin and shame; still, some have told me their sad story. How a playmate, or servant girl, first led them to trifle with their own organization; and how, when they came to know it was wrong, they tried in vain to correct the habit. The remorse, the hopeless wretchedness which results from this practice can not be described.

Many intelligent Christian mothers have told me their trials on this point: that the brightest in the family group without any apparent cause was growing weak, sick, dispirited, morbid; and, at last, she detected the distressing fact that little hands were working the worst mischief that can be done to the human body. It is exceedingly difficult to correct a habit in young children about which they are so



sly. In older ones, the excitability will continue long after the habit which induced it has been abandoned.

I might fill pages with the sad stories, the almost hopeless struggles against this sin; but I shrink from writing and you from reading on this subject, and both will be in vain, unless I can help mothers to live on more confidential terms with their children. There should be freedom of speech between them on all matters of delicacy, so that the young may be informed, if temptation comes; for when it does come, the mother is not there to give warning. For instance, say to a child that these delicate organs are never to be trifled with; that all handling of them, save when absolutely necessary, does harm; that they are so connected with the spine and brain by nerves that, if they are irritated, they make a weak back, weak eyes, bad head, spasms, etc.; that God has commanded us to keep ourselves pure, and if we do not we are punished by loss of power in body and mind. All this may be put in simple language, and so impressed on the child that it will be remembered, if any one tries to lead it into these habits. Do not delude yourselves with the idea that your children are so closely guarded, that their associations are so select, that they are in no danger.

Victims of this vice are to be found in the best of homes. In many cases, the companion chosen by parents as a suitable associate for their little flock has been the one who has brought this sin into what seemed a secure fold. Try to help your children to feel so much at home with you that they will find it easy to tell you their little trials and temp-



tations. For lack of this freedom they often confide in those who can not give them good counsel. Children are social, and they must have somebody to talk with. We, of riper years, have often found the twilight hour the one best suited to confidential talk. So children, if drawn from their sports before they are tired, will enjoy a short story, a little Bible reading, and perchance be led to some confessions before the little prayer. Then there are the incidents of the day, calling for commendation or criticism.

#### HOW TO TEACH THE YOUNG.

As to those matters of delicate mystery about which little folks often inquire and get no information, let me say, tell them the truth, if you tell them any thing. If you think that they are too immature to understand or to make good use of the truth, tell them so, and assure them when they are old enough that you will explain it all to them, and be sure to make good your promise. If they ask you where babies come from, do not say that "the doctor brings them," or that "papa finds them under a black stump."

A little girl of my acquaintance once asked the man who came into the field with his stump-machine, to "please save all the babies" he found, "for mamma said they were hid under the stumps!"

A new mother was asked, one Christmas morning, by a little boy, how Santa Claus could get a real live baby in her stocking! "Why," he added, "mine had only a few nuts, candies, and a little sugar dog, and it was chuck full."

Sooner or later, children find out all these fibs, and it les-



---

sens their respect for truth, or, at least, for the truthfulness of the parent. Besides this, it is likely to incite a prurient curiosity, and lead them to think there is something disreputable in regard to all matters pertaining to maternity. A little is learned, and that often from persons "low and vulgar," the imagination then supplies the rest, and, of course, it can never be so pure to the mind as simple, scientific truth.

An eminent clergyman once said to me that whatever his mother told him on matters of delicacy always seemed chaste, but that there were many subjects that he could never disconnect from the low associations with which the knowledge of them was first allied.

I once asked a physician, for whom I had great respect, if he could suggest some work suitable for a widowed friend to give her son, who was just coming to manhood and was in need of fatherly guidance. "Is your friend a lady of intelligence and refinement?" asked the doctor. "Yes," I replied. "Then tell her to talk to him herself. She can do him more good than any book."

"But," you ask, "why do children, now, need to know so much more on these matters than when we were young? I knew nothing and came up unharmed." "Well," as we old folks always say, "the times have changed." Children in these days have less manual labor to perform, and more mental excitement. Food, books, social habits, all are of a more stimulating character. Hence the nervous system is more excitable, and nerve-power is not expended by slow muscular action, as in those early days when the



young were of necessity brought up to work. Therefore, there is a greater tendency to unrest and passional excitement.

Many mothers know their children need this information, but feel in doubt how to impart the same. First, keep up as far as possible the freedom of love incident to early childhood between yourself and little ones, and from time to time impart instruction in an easy way, incidentally, when some circumstance prompts, not as if you had some terrible secret, which it was almost a disgrace to impart.

In Scripture reading you will find just the texts which, when explained, will give children the needed information. Let your earlier Bible lessons be the sweet stories of Jesus, which, with a little explanation, the youngest will enjoy. Avoid reading that which they can not comprehend. Encourage their asking questions, and have them tell you what they have been reading, in their own language, so as to be sure they catch the meaning. In this way they will acquire the habit of looking for the significance of every word, and to inquire, if they do not comprehend. When they are old enough, let them first read, with you alone, the story of the birth of Jesus, or of John, and then after this, the Old Testament history.

If they have been in the habit of understanding what they read, they will ask questions which will call forth explanations as to the mystery of birth, and the relations of father and mother. If you meet this duty before the sexual element is developed, before impure thoughts have been implanted by others, they will listen with a simple scientific



---

interest, and be pleased with the analogies of nature. Explain to them that it takes two elements in the animal and vegetable kingdom to perpetuate life; that in blossoms the pollen must fall upon the pistils to perfect the seed; that the eggs of the domestic fowl and the birds of the air must be impregnated, or no little chickens or little birds will come; that an egg, perfected either within or without the body, is the great source of life for beasts, birds, fishes, and men. Thus, let your little learner look up to the great law, and the great Lawgiver, before lust and low associates have taken him captive.

While you encourage freedom between yourself and children, tell them that these matters are not topics for general conversation, that it is right for them to talk with you, to ask you all they wish to know, and as fast as they can understand you will explain, but that they should not talk with others; that each child should learn from its own mother. You ask, At what age should this instruction be imparted? "That must depend upon the symptoms," as the doctors say. Some children develop in intelligence, and in moral sense, much earlier than others. The faithful mother knows best when knowledge will be well used, and how soon it is needed. May she be wise in time.



## INTENTIONAL ABORTION.

---

A MANUAL to meet the wants of women would be incomplete without a chapter on Abortions, or "Miscarriages," as they are called. We will consider them under two classes—the induced and the accidental.

We have been consulted by many women who wished to know how to produce a miscarriage, and by many more who would prevent such a mishap. Young married women often lack child-like repose in wedded love, and in the great Father who orders the result, and so are anxious to avert pregnancy. They fear the pain, the peril, the incumbrance, or the expense. They married for the pleasure of "husbandly petting," not being ready for the responsibility of a parent. Now, no woman should marry unless she is willing to accept all the possibilities of wifehood. Mothers should well instruct their daughters on this point: that little ones will be likely to come, and that it will be a sin against the body and the soul to try to shirk the responsibilities.

Many young wives, being anxious in this particular, watch for the return of the menses, grow worried if they



do not appear, and take violent exercise, powerful purgatives, patent nostrums, "female pills," etc., or, still worse, resort to some mechanical means to stimulate the uterus to expel its contents. All these means make mischief of many kinds. Often the woman is not pregnant, but the course of stimulants and irritants induce an excessive menstrual flow, which becomes chronic, and is a source of debility, and frequently of severe disease.

But suppose conception had taken place—Nature's work can not be thus abruptly arrested, without reacting unfavorably upon the organs thus employed. I have seen many cases of severe uterine disturbances induced in this way. An abortion during the early months is likely to be attended with profuse, sometimes fatal flooding. But escaping this, the uterus is left congested, and menstruation is apt to be profuse afterward; and it often requires a long course of general and special treatment to cure the chronic congestion, granulation, or enlargement which has been induced.

Women, for lack of information, are often misled. Many suppose that the earlier the period of delivery the less the peril, while the truth is just the opposite. Nature's way is the best way. Delivery at the ninth month is the safest time and the nearer we come to that the better. The most serious cases of hemorrhage I have ever seen have been at six weeks, or two or three months. The uterus is then so small, that the removal of the placenta, or after-birth, by artificial means is exceedingly difficult, and, until this is removed, the patient is liable to die of flooding, or from



inflammation induced by the absorption of the decaying placenta.

Those interested in inducing abortions, for the sake of the fee, usually make light of these dangers. I have many times been called in counsel when the case had taken a serious turn, and found that the young wife was evidently ignorant of the liabilities, and supposed that the bougie or the tent would bring on a sickness like that of the ordinary monthly period.

There are cases of induced abortions, where there is no apparent immediate injury. Judgment is not always executed speedily, therefore abortionists make the most of these cases to secure confidence in their evil work. But the violence done to the nervous and circulatory systems will tell in time. Physicians should be like ministers—guides to the people, and when their patients want to go wrong, they should lead and hold them to the right.

I know many a wife who has lost her health, and some who have lost their lives, when I felt that the physician was the greater sinner of the two, in that he sinned against greater light and with less temptation than beset the gay young wife, or the already overburdened mother. I have no words to express how I regard those who, having knowledge, use it for the sake of the fee, to blight, and not to bless.

I know the arguments of these worried women, how each will depict her needs, and make hers an exceptional case, and promise pay, and assure you that "It must be done! You can do it better than any one else, and now that it is



---

so early, there is no life, hence no sin," etc. As to the last argument, there is life, human life, as truly during the first month as at the ninth, only not as vigorous. The fact is, that the impregnated ovum lives and grows according to the laws which regulate the human body, makes it a human being, and an attack with intent to kill is crime, whether the victim be large or small.

"But," says our client, "quickening is not till the four-and-a-half month, and so, abortion before that time is no sin." True, that is about the time that the mother becomes conscious of motion, but it lives, moves, and grows just as truly before as after, only the motions are so slight as not to be appreciated. "But," some one says, "what shall we poor, sick, overworked women do, who have now more children than we can well look after—more than our husbands can well provide for?" For such I have no advice. I can only commend them to a husband's consideration, and the counsel of a conscientious family physician.

There are conditions when it seems as if pregnancy should be avoided. Remember, I say avoided, *not* interrupted. Once begun, go if possible to the close; that is the only safe way for body or spirit. I know your burdens are heavy, but sin is heavier. Be the true mother, whether you are among the weary ones of earth, or those so worn that the dear Lord gives them an early release from mortal care.

Where one woman, having healthful habits and a cheerful spirit, suffers from too frequent child-bearing, *scores* are



broken in health by efforts to prevent conception, or to induce abortion.

The German women welcome babies, have them in great numbers, and are robust. The French, with their preventions, have very few children and are delicate and sensitive.

While writing this chapter, a young wife called; she had a sick face, and eyes expressive of great mental agony. "I have done wrong," she said, "and am very sorry; I have come to you for counsel. I had excellent health until a few months ago, when my monthly period not coming so soon as expected, I began to be fearful I was pregnant, and as we had two little children, and my husband's means are moderate, I did not want any more just yet; so I sent to the doctor to give me some medicine to bring on my menses, thinking if I was in a family-way it would do no harm, as it was only a few days over my time. The doctor said he thought I was pregnant, and it was a pity to have another baby when this one was so young, and that he would use an instrument to bring me around all right, which would do no harm; that there was nothing wrong in so doing. I yielded, and have never been well since. I have had a bad leucorrhea, a weak back, pain and pressure in front, and I am so afraid that terrible instrument has done some harm which can never be cured; that I shall never have any more children, and then I should be so sorry. Besides all this, I have such remorse that I can not eat or sleep as I used to, and have lost my flesh, strength, and cheerfulness of spirit."



---

I assured her that she could be cured, and that though she had done wrong, the dear Lord forgave all the truly penitent; that she could not get well if she continued thus to worry about the injury done, or the sin committed. During this conversation hope dawned in her darkened countenance, and she said, "You have done me good, and I will try to get well, and will welcome the little ones, few or many."

I have given you this instance to illustrate what I have so often seen, that the fear of injury done, and remorse for the deed, drives women almost or quite to despair. There is a peculiar look in the eye which I note, and dread the confessions of such patients when they come for consultation.

In my early practice I was often asked to induce abortions, for the impression seemed to prevail then that the important part of woman's work in the medical profession was to prevent pregnancy or procure abortion. With advancing years, I find myself the mother-confessor of many who have done mischief, and now want to be absolved from the mental and physical misery entailed.

Many are victims of a melancholy which amounts to monomania. When children die, or troubles come, they think they are being punished for this sin against their motherhood. There are two causes of this mental condition—the sense of wrong, which invites remorse, and the uterine disease that is likely to ensue from an intentional abortion, which brings mental depression.



Since writing the foregoing chapter, a prize essay on this subject has come under my eye. If my readers wish to know more on this point, let them read the book entitled "Why Not?" by Dr. H. R. Storer, of Boston. The manifold miseries resulting from produced abortions there portrayed accord with my personal observations.



## ACCIDENTAL ABORTION.

---

WE will now consider our second class, that is, when an abortion is *not* desired, but dreaded. The present enfeebled condition of American women furnishes many such. Some who have been sinners of the first class, find themselves sufferers in the second. Many of those who did not want children early or rapidly, in after years often desire offspring; but the uterus has been so often prompted to "cast its fruit before the time," that the habit is formed, and it will do so without artificial aid. I have seen many a mother in deep grief, not only for the children she had lost by death, but for those she might have had.

There are various phases of chronic uterine disease that render the organ irritable, so that hemorrhages and spasmodic contractions occur, endangering pregnancy. We have seen many of these pass on to full term after the uterine disease was cured, who had previously had several abortions, despite all means to prevent it. Usually, they were of the class requiring local treatment, which we will not dwell upon, as we are writing for the patient, and not for the medical profession.



## PREVENTIVES.

When the habit of abortion at a given time has been established, it is better to let two or three years pass without pregnancy. During the time, improve the general health, and then the mother will be much more likely to go on safely than when frequent conceptions occur. If there is any special disease of the uterus, it is better to have it cured *before* impregnation takes place, though there are means which will serve to help, in case one is so unfortunate as to have pregnancy and uterine disease combined.

When the patient has leucorrhea, weak back, and a sense of bearing down, the sitz bath, bandages, and vaginal injections, as described in the chapters on Prolapsus Uteri and Leucorrhea, will be of great advantage.

Those subject to profuse menstruation are more likely to miscarry than those in whom the flow is moderate. To such, we commend the chapter on Menorrhagia. Those who have had previous abortions are more liable to the accident at about the same date of their pregnancy. There is also more danger at the period in the month when menstruation would have occurred, hence there should be especial care at these times about over-exertion or mental excitement.

When there is habitual constipation, the accumulation of fæces, the presence of hemorrhoids may irritate the uterus, in a sensitive person, so as to induce a miscarriage. Also, conjugal excess has the same liabilities.

Avoid straining at stool. On retiring at night, half a pint of cool water taken into the bowels, and retained, will



---

often secure a free movement in the morning; otherwise, it is best to resort to an enema of tepid water, large as can be taken when lying on the left side, so as to relieve the bowels perfectly.

Many might escape a miscarriage if they had been better informed on this subject. For instance, those who are weak often find, during the second or third month, that they have a slight flow, and, supposing that an abortion is inevitable, take no care to prevent it; others take an opposite view, and think if they have no pain there is no danger, and so they go on until it is too late to prevent it.

Now the truth lies between the two extremes; there is danger, but there is also hope. If there is any flow of bright color, however slight, the prospective mother should take to bed or couch. Use two or three cool sitz baths a day, wear the wet girdle, and keep the bowels free with enemas. If there is any tendency to pelvic pain, after the bowels have been evacuated by a large enema of tepid water, take fifteen drops of laudanum in a table-spoonful of water into the rectum, to retain. I have known many threatened abortions prevented by these simple methods.

In case the flooding becomes profuse, there is little hope for the child, and, unless it is promptly arrested, the mother is in peril; and if there is no physician at hand, use cold compresses across the abdomen, rub ice over the pelvis, and introduce bits of ice into the vagina.

#### CARE DURING AN ABORTION.

Sometimes, despite the best of treatment, the little one is



lost. If pain continues and the flow increases, we may be quite sure this will be the result, and a physician should be summoned immediately.

In case of flooding before medical aid arrives, follow the directions given for uterine hemorrhage after delivery at full term.

Occasionally, the foetus escapes without premonitory symptoms, the after-birth being retained. In such cases, the patient is in peril until it is removed, for severe and fatal flooding may ensue when least expected.

I remember a call at midnight to a wife in the country, from whom, two weeks previously, a foetus at about the third month had been passed, without pain and without flow, as she arose in the morning. She kept the bed for a day, but as no pain or flow appeared, she went about her work as usual, not realizing that she could be in danger when she felt so well, and when trouble came she had no physician near, and no one at home to summon aid. When I reached her, no pulse at the wrist was perceptible. Ice was applied over the pelvis, and the after-birth promptly removed by the hand. Brandy, tea, and such restoratives as her stomach would retain, were administered. For hours she hung between life and death, and at last rallied sufficiently to retain beef tea, but it was months before the color returned to her lips, or strength to her limbs.

I have given this instance to impress the fact that, long as the after-birth is unremoved, there is danger from flooding. I find many who suppose the placenta is so small in early pregnancy, that it will do no harm if retained. Hem-



---

orrhage is the usual result, though occasionally it decays and induces irritation and inflammation by absorption.

The general treatment after an abortion should be much the same as that described after delivery at the end of nine months: sitz baths, bandages, vaginal injections, quiet, etc. The same care in reference to over-exertion should also be observed, till the next monthly illness is well passed, which is liable to be more profuse than usual. Through lack of care at this point many are left confirmed invalids.

There is more danger of disease after an abortion than after delivery at full term. Women not realizing this, fail to take the long rest they need. They resume the duties of wife and mother while the uterus is still sensitive, and the organ remains congested. Then ensues leucorrhea, prolapsus, profuse menstruation, etc.

#### RELATIVE DANGERS OF THE TWO CLASSES.

The peril from intentional abortions is much greater than from the accidental. You ask, Why? The latter class have no remorse to endure, no sense of sin or shame to cover. These sins wear rapidly on a sensitive organization. Moreover, Nature completes her work, or repairs her failures best when least interfered with.

In the spring every orchard produces millions of blossoms, which never set to fruit, and of the little apples well begun many will fall to the ground before they ripen; some because there is not life enough to sustain all, others because their attachment to the parent stem was too slight. Meanwhile, the great tree stands unharmed by the dropping



off. But let it be hurriedly deprived of untimely fruit by rude boys, and it will be bereft of leaves, twigs, bark, and branches. So of the fruit of the womb. If the natural supply fails, if the ovum be blighted, or if the attachment to the uterus be imperfect, then Nature will cast it off in the best time and the best way, or at least give indications when scientific aid is required.

If, "without cause or provocation," pregnancy be forcibly interrupted while the blood is setting vigorously toward the uterus, for its own supply and that of its inmate, we arrest a strong nervous and circulating force in the discharge of its duty, and hence must do great violence to the established order of things. Unless there is a tendency to miscarriage, it is not easily accomplished. Severe drugging and serious injury to the uterus may be inflicted, still the little life within may go on undisturbed. But if, for any reason, there is a proclivity in that direction, a *slight* accident may induce **an abortion.**



## STERILITY.

---

THE scarcity of children in the halls of the rich, the abundance of little folks in and around the hovels of the poor, is a matter of common observation. Men have written long and learned articles on the law of human increase, showing much thought and extended research. Doctors of Divinity and of Medicine talk and write of the dwindling of the true American race, giving us statistics of the ratio of increase as it once was, and now is, among our own people. To review this ground would be to write a large book instead of a short chapter, so I shall simply confine myself to a few suggestions which have occurred to me from the care of those who longed for children, but to whom they were denied.

There are many who, for selfish reasons, ward off the responsibilities of maternity. Besides these, there is a larger class than is usually supposed to exist, who long for a son as did Hannah of old, and to whom the little Samuel has never come. Some of these did not want little ones in their early wedded years, but later would have gladly welcomed them.



Girls grown up indulgently, with little thought save to get the most pleasure possible out of life, are apt to feel when they are first married that they can not and will not bear children. But when the freshness of young wifehood begins to fade, they want some new interest, and feel that they have nothing in particular to live for. Then the motherly yearning develops, and they desire offspring. Doubtless many of these might once have become mothers.

#### HABIT.

When marriage has been made unfruitful by varied means for a series of years, it is likely to continue thus, even if the preventives are discontinued. The uterus is influenced by habit, evidently quite as much as any other organ of the body. So when it has been, year after year, accustomed to cast its ovum at a given time because impregnation has been prevented, it is likely to continue to do so when preventives are not used. Hence those who by the simplest and safest of means prevent conception, often find in after years that when they wish children they are denied.

The uterine habit of expelling the ovum seems to be established, even when no positive disease can be detected. There are many others who, by using vaginal injections of water too cold, or improperly medicated, in order to prevent conception, have thereby induced uterine congestion or spasmodic irritability, which may result in sterility. Water, pure or medicated, can be used of varying temperature by means of a syringe to meet certain diseased conditions with



---

advantage, but applied without discrimination when the organs are in a peculiarly sensitive condition, often induces serious disease.

#### LOCAL CAUSES.

There are others who take remedies as they near the monthly period, "to be sure," as they say, "to bring it on," fearing impregnation has taken place. The result may be uterine irritation by a hastening of the period, or increase of the flow terminating in a slight congestion, which, repeated for successive months, becomes severe. No doubt many an impregnated ovum is lost in this way, when there is no symptom beyond that of being a little sicker than usual, which habit continues long after the means which were first used to induce it have been discontinued.

Besides these, the use of sponges, bougies, and other mechanical means, to prevent conception or induce abortion, result in more or less of uterine inflammation, or irritability, or both. Hence the varied ways taken to prevent pregnancy for the present, often induce permanent sterility. First, the more impressible period for procreation is past, and a habit of rejecting the ovum also established. Besides this, organic disease is induced which does not necessarily preclude pregnancy, but makes it less probable, and also renders a miscarriage much more liable to occur.

On the precise nature of those local conditions which prevent conception I will not dwell, as they can only be detected or corrected by the experienced physician having the



---

patient in charge. Suffice it to say, that we have seen cases of apparent sterility overcome by curing disease or displacement of the uterus, also by correcting flexion, and strictures of the cervix. The latter is sometimes remedied by dilatation, sometimes by incision, according to the peculiarity of the case, and the preference of the attending physician. Excessive menstruation, profuse leucorrhea, or tenacious lymph secreted within the *os uteri*, may prevent conception.

#### GENERAL CONDITION.

Besides the local troubles, there are constitutional conditions which have an important bearing on the law of human increase. A well-balanced temperament renders procreation much more probable; or, in other words, if the brain is developed at the expense of the body, babies are likely to be scarce. Mind and muscle must go together to make womanhood complete. Hence those wives who are intensely absorbed in literary pursuits, so as to impair bodily vigor, have few if any children. So, too, those devoted to fashionable life exhaust their nervous power in their round of gayeties, and are less likely to become mothers. Besides this, their style of dress usually interferes seriously with the nutritive processes of the system, of which we will speak in the succeeding chapter.

The kind of food used has also an important influence on procreation. The horticulturist knows if his soil is too rich the blossoms will produce more petals, but diminish in the amount of seed furnished, and if long over-nourished the



---

latter will fail entirely. The French fable of the woman and her one hen, which she fed abundantly hoping for more than a daily egg, and which soon failed to produce any, is like most fables, founded on fact. Animals fed on too rich, or too concentrated food, greatly diminish in their procreative power. Rabbits fed on fine sugar chiefly cease to breed, and dissection shows a fatty degeneration of the ovary.

It is a general law that adipose tissue, or fat, increases as the reproductive power decreases. After the menopause, women grow stout, unless some diseased condition or constitutional proclivity prevents. Those who are very fleshy have few if any children.

The delicacies so relished by ladies of leisure are to their organization what fine sugar is to the rabbit. Soft cellular tissue rather than muscular fiber results from their mode of life. They may be plump, but are not strong. Is it any wonder, then, that children are few on Fifth Avenue, while they swarm in great numbers about the Five Points, and that the same rule holds true in reference to every town, large or small? Indeed, women of wealth in the country have adopted so many of the sins of their city sisters, that they, too, have childless homes. The higher the grade of civilization, or rather the greater the excesses which wealth and leisure bring, the lower will be the ratio of reproduction.

New England, as it *was*, furnished the best of mothers—women with active brains and busy bodies, women who bore children and literally “brought them up,” who ruled their



own homes and did their own work. With them there was a healthful activity of mind and body, which secures what physiologists call a well-developed and harmoniously exercised organization, which is especially favorable to reproduction.



## NERVOUS DERANGEMENT.

---

### CAUSES.

WITHIN the last half century there has been a great increase in the variety and frequency of what are termed nervous diseases. Mrs. Child once told an amusing story of an old lady who had some symptoms not well understood, which the physician pronounced nervous. "Oh, no," said the lady, "that can not be, for I was born before nerves were in fashion!" Many of us have painful evidence that we were born since that time.

The advance of civilization brings greater cultivation of the mental powers, sentiments, and passions. Added luxuries, indulgencies, and plans for business or pleasure, all tend to a higher development of the nervous system, and hence render it more susceptible and more easily deranged. Modern physicians have spent much time in investigating the pathology of nervous diseases, and still they are usually a perplexity.

An over-taxed nervous system often shows itself by some sensitiveness, the cause of which is obscure. It may be pain in the face (*tic-douloureux*), or in the leg (*sciatica*); the eye



may be super-sensitive to light, the ear to sound, or a tooth may ache without any visible defect. Frequent attacks of neuralgia, severe nervous headache, or periods of peculiar depression may occur without apparent cause. Besides these, there is a long list of indescribable sensations, annoying to the physician, and distressing to the patient.

#### PECULIARITIES.

An invalid young lady coming under my care, brought a letter from her family physician which read thus: "The patient I send you is a sufferer from some anomalous nervous disease, which I have not been able to reach, but hope you will be more fortunate."

Now, these anomalous nervous diseases are like the contents of Pandora's box. When we find ourselves being visited by any of them we should at once inquire, What is unhealthful in our habits? Do we work, or worry too much? Are we properly nourished by food, and refreshed by sleep? Have we a chronic heartache, which wears by day and night?

The cause of these nervous troubles is sometimes mental and sometimes physical. Many a serious invalid could be cured by cheerful resignation and healthful occupation, but discarding these, there is no physician who can reach the case.

Sometimes a bad spirit makes a bad body, and sometimes a bad body makes a bad spirit. So intimate is the connection between them, that if one is wrong it disturbs the other. Often it is as difficult to tell where the mischief



---

began, as it is to find out, when two boys have a quarrel, or two girls a "fuss," who began it. But in either instance, by keeping a sharp eye on both parties, and on all the points in the case, we shall soon see *which* leads the way into trouble.

Dyspepsia, derangements of the liver, diseases of the uterus, induces nervous disturbance and mental depression, and the spirit brightens as the body improves. On the contrary, certain morbid emotions invite and perpetuate diseased conditions.

The affections called hysterical are so varied in their manifestations that we can say nothing definite respecting them. They simulate so perfectly other diseases as often to deceive for a time the best physician. True currency has usually a counterfeit. So most forms of chronic disease have their similitudes in the form of hysterical symptoms.

We have seen all manner of spasms, spinal irritations, cramps and colics, which seemed to arise from an unhealthy mental rather than physical condition. Patients thus afflicted are usually honest in their statement of symptoms.

Morbid sensations have been magnified by much thought and care, and the patient needs diversion, change of place, and hygienic help. Some persons desire to be considered delicate, and for lack of work or diversion want to be doctored. These have so lively an imagination that they can not tell the truth in regard to their own case, though they may be trustworthy in reference to other matters. When the moral as well as physical sense has become perverted, they are more difficult of cure.



## HELP IMPARTED BY ANOTHER.

All classes of nervous patients are greatly helped by the personal supervision of some one who, in character, is quiet, self-possessed, contented, and positive. For instance, hysteria, insanity, screams, and spasms, in a great variety of cases, can be controlled without a single remedy, save that of sending away all troubled and excited persons, and having some suitable individual sit beside the patient. The less done at the time the better. The cure must come by correcting the habits of mind or body which induced the attacks.

Many women who have been confined to the bed for months will walk without the least protest, under the influence of a positive person for whom they have respect. How far the poor patient is responsible for all these freaks is often difficult to decide. They may so long have lost self-control, that they can not regain it without help.

## HYSTERIA.

The question is often asked, "Can a person help having the hysterics?" No doubt many might, if they tried early enough, but once having given way to their feelings, it is difficult if not quite impossible to resume control before the nervous paroxysm has expended its force, unless some strong will comes to the rescue. Fits of laughing, crying, and cramping can be guarded against, by avoiding what unduly excites or exhausts the nervous system; but when self-possession is once lost, the patient is like a frightened horse, who



---

runs all the faster when he finds his master no longer holds the reins.

Hysterical persons, for the most part, should neither be blamed or petted, but rather steadied in those healthful habits of body and mind which secure self-control. Avoid all severe measures if possible, but if the case is desperate, we do sometimes put the patient into the plunge, or dash with cold water, with the best results, and seldom have to repeat the process. The shock on the nervous system arrests the spasmodic action for the time, and proves such an alternative that it is not likely to return.

#### MODE OF LIFE.

The fast ways of the American people, with their hurried lives, late hours, and varied excesses, wear upon the nervous system of all, especially that of sensitive, impressible women. Those who are brilliant and fascinating early become frail, freaky, fidgety—a condition difficult to cure, but which could be prevented by leading a quiet life, with more of simple, useful work, of which this world furnishes an abundance.

Anxiety as to dress, social position, calls and company, wears one more than needed work, and the exhausted system craves some stimulus. It makes one wakeful, and deprives of a relish for plain, nourishing food. Nerves exhausted, and then over-stimulated, soon get beyond the control of patient or physician. After tea, coffee, wine, and brandy have been her reliance for a time, the subject finds herself unable to “keep up” without their aid. Of this class we have seen many sad cases.



By all this, we do not mean to prove that the "former days" were better than these, but would rather say, in the language of the children's hymn:

" I thank the goodness and the grace  
That on my birth have smiled."

We rejoice in the added facilities given women for general culture. Statistics tell us the length of human life is on the increase. The light of popular physiology has not been in vain. We have more leisure, more means, more books, and better schools than our grandmothers enjoyed. For all these we give thanks, and are grateful. The point we deprecate is that so much time and means are expended in pursuits not ennobling, not invigorating to body or soul. Our good things, given by the "Father of Lights," should not bring feebleness in any respect, but a more fully-developed womanhood in all directions.

As want of sleep is *the* one great source of nervous derangement, we will next present our thoughts on this subject as given in *The Herald of Health* for 1867.



## SLEEP.

---

“**TIRED** nature’s sweet restorer, balmy sleep !  
Who, like the world, his ready visit pays  
Where fortune smiles ; the wretched he forsakes ;  
Swift on his downy pinion flies from woe,  
And lights on lids unsullied by a tear.”—YOUNG.

**W**OMEN are supposed to be most largely endowed with the soothing elements. Hence, among the household divinities, the wife should be as the goddess of sleep, giving every one their portion in due season, or, at least, so ordering the ways of her household as will best conduce to this happy result. The peace and prosperity of every family depends largely upon each member having the requisite amount of sleep. Hence, the lady of the house should look after all—from master to servant, from mistress to maid, from the youngest child to the grown-up lads and misses—with reference to this all-important point : that is, do they sleep long and well? The mother often says, by way of excuse : “The baby is cross for want of a nap.” The same apology might often well be made for children of larger growth ; they, too, are often so tired they can’t be good, and still do not know that it is sleep they need. During the early years of our work in the invalid world, I was impressed with the idea that much



irritability and multiplied infirmities were induced by lack of sufficient sleep. Subsequent observation has confirmed these early opinions.

#### SLEEP PHYSIOLOGICALLY CONSIDERED.

Let us take a physiological view of our sleepy subject.

Those organs which connect us with the world about us tire by use, by activity, and hence the need of that temporary suspension of action which we call sleep. Thus the mind, muscles, eye, ear, and indeed every sense, every voluntary power, must have its period of rest, that the system may repair the waste of nervous force induced by their action. The nutritive functions continue their work from the beginning to the end of life with little variation. Or, in other words, the involuntary forces of our bodies go on, with but slight modification, both when we wake and when we sleep, year in and year out. To illustrate:—The heart keeps up its steady tick-tack by night and day, like a true time-keeper, to the end of our pilgrimage, even if it be four-score years or more, while our voluntary powers weary with use. Thus the feet tire with walking, the hands with working, the eyes with seeing, the ear with hearing, and even the tongue with talking. Then the only perfect rest which can come must be by sleep, which is a torpitude of the voluntary organs, while the involuntary continue their customary action. It is by this means that the great nervous center of animal life is renovated. Hence, sleep is as needful as food to sustain life, and it is supposed persons



---

can live longer without eating than without sleeping. Among the inventions of the Chinese for human torture, that of keeping the victim awake till death ensued, is said to be the most terrible. This we may well believe, for some of the most distressing nervous diseases arise from want of sufficient sleep, and those, too, which it is quite impossible to relieve by any remedial means.

#### THE INFLUENCE OF HABIT.

Noise and mental excitement tend to keep the brain aroused to activity; but at length, if we are well, sleep draws on, even when the internal effort and external surroundings conspire to ward it off. So the fatigued soldier has often fallen asleep amid the discharge of artillery. An engineer slept within a boiler while heavy hammers were riveting on the outside. In sleep, as in other things, we are influenced by habit. If accustomed to sleep in stillness, we are greatly disturbed by noise. If accustomed to noise, we are disturbed by stillness. A proprietor of extensive iron-works sleeps sweetly within the sound of tilt-hammers, forges, and explosions, but awakes immediately if any interruption occurs during the night. The motion of the cradle and the singing of the nurse, which are soothing to an infant accustomed to that sort of quietus, would wake a child unused to them. We also have a story of the snoring husband, whose wife tried in vain to sleep when her "gude man" was away, until "Betty the cook" bethought that the sound of the coffee-mill was similar to



that made by her snoring master, "and so kept that a-going" until it soothed her mistress to sleep. It is a bad habit to become dependent on books, coffee-mills, cradles, or any external aid to invite sleep.

Children who must be rocked, read to, lain with, or have a light in the room till they are asleep, are usually nervous, excitable, over-sensitive—a heavy tax on mother, aunty, nurse, and all hands. We remember one such who was always walked to sleep in the arms of a nurse; the child grew heavy, and the nurse grew tired; and so one day she gave out, and the baby could not go to sleep. The mother tried the work, but found it too heavy; next, the fond father undertook the task, but grew weary of the steady to and fro in his own private room, and for a change went to the wood-house and mounted the horse-power for wood-sawing. And so papa walked, the machine rolled, baby laughed, and all went well for a time. But, by-and-by, the father grew tired of playing horse, but, not being way-wise in machines, he did not know how to stop it, or to get off when it was going. Pat being just then out of hearing, he called a long time in vain for help, and so got a good sweat on a warm summer's day, and was never known to say again that it was easy work to keep baby quiet.

If we remember rightly, little ones get more tending now than when we were of that class. The result of all this attention is too much excitement, too little rest. But even in these "degenerate days" we know a beautiful blue-eyed baby in the Chemung Valley, who of her own free will sleeps sixteen or eighteen hours out of the twenty-four,



---

and when awake is bright, lively, and happy as possible. From 8 in the evening till 9 or 10 in the morning she sleeps sweetly. She then breakfasts, and lies on the floor amusing herself with her own private gymnastics, for her limbs are not fettered by long, heavy skirts. At about 12 o'clock she dines, and then sleeps until 2 or 3 o'clock.

Thus the long summer days go by, the happy mother finding time to not only attend to her baby, but also to her household cares—a mother whose early medical training has not blighted any domestic grace, but rather brightened and ripened them all, so that she not only makes the best butter in the valley, but also takes the most intelligent, loving care of her children. If they are sick or irritable, she knows whether it is food, sleep, or a bath that they need. Here, often, a boy is sent to his room for a nap for some perversity of spirit, which would have cost him quite another kind of discipline with a mother less judicious.

We trust our readers will not deem that ours is an iron rule—that children should never be soothed to sleep by any other. Of course, there are emergencies of sickness, overweariness, peculiarities of temperament to be met with. But, as a general rule, children will sleep and eat without much petting, if they are well managed. We remember a little fellow who from his earliest infancy onward was seldom “put to sleep,” but was simply picked up and laid in his crib, and so took his nap without rocking or crying. One sultry summer’s day he tried in vain to take his afternoon nap. He cooled himself by turning first on one side and then on the other; next, holding up one leg and then the



other. Now he soothed himself by counting his fingers and toes, and next by putting his thumb in his mouth. But all to no purpose; he was too restless to sleep. At last he called out: "Mamma, please give me a love pat, and that will help me to go to sleep, I guess." The love pats, a series of them, were given, and a kiss too. Soon after, the fringed lids lay quietly over those twinkling eyes, and the restless limbs were resting in sleep. Many a child of larger growth has felt just this want of being soothed when wearied and "worried."

Very few of us are strong enough to always stand alone, or even rest alone. Sometimes we are not willing to ask this aid; perchance we may not know we need it, or who can give it. But we have at all times felt an infusion of strength, of resignation, of returning self-possession coming from the heart, the eye, the word of another. Sometimes we fall beneath a load which the finger of a friend would have lightened, or, better still, have steadied us in bearing, by soothing us to sleep, and so with sleep would come the strength to do the work or endure the sorrow.

#### INFLUENCE OF SLEEP ON THE SENSES.

When we sleep too little our sensibilities often grow abnormally acute, so that sleep is well-nigh impossible. But if our habits are healthful, the need of sleep makes all our senses more and more obtuse until they fail to act. The power of the will over the muscles is lessened or lost—so eyelids fall and, if sitting up, arms drop, nod-



---

ding ensues, as seen in church when the brain has been soothed by a good sermon, or narcotized by bad air. Sight fails first when we go to sleep, then taste, next smell, and lastly touch. The awakening is the reverse of this order—that is, the last is first. The sense of feeling is the first aroused, so we change our position if we do not lie comfortably, and draw up the bed-clothes if we are cold, even when we are in every other respect asleep. This sense seems to be a sort of sentinel, which sleeps so lightly that it can look after our physical wants and personal safety while our more delicate powers rest soundly.

Of this we had a most amusing illustration a few nights since in our large family. A little boy went to his room at an early hour, locked the door, and fell asleep. When his mother came she tried in vain to arouse him, and was soon joined by her friends along the hall, and such a concert of calls, raps, kicks, and rattling of the door was never heard before in our quiet household. The pass-key could not be used, for the key was left in the inside of the lock. By means of a ladder the window was reached, but the blinds were fastened on the inside. Next, heads were thrust in at the ventilator above the door, and calls by voices sharp and soft, familiar and unfamiliar, were tried in vain, making not the least impression on the sleeper. At last it was suggested that, though his ears were locked, the sense of touch never slept as soundly. So a tall man, with long arms and a longer fishing-rod, mounted a chair and thrust head and shoulders through the only orifice, the open ventilator, giving the sleeper sundry taps, or “pokes,” as he said,



with the fishing-pole, which operation soon proved efficient, without harm to the patient.

During sleep respiration and circulation are retarded; hence heat is generated more slowly, and so, if insufficiently covered, we take cold more readily than when awake and active. Digestion, too, is more tardy, so we eat three meals in the twelve working-hours, and none for the next twelve. Good sleep is so refreshing that we have the old French proverb: "Who sleeps, dines." But a watcher wants a second supper or an early breakfast.

#### DREAMS.

When sleep is complete, the brain seems to be in a state of perfect rest; but when only partial, as in slumber, ideas flit in a disorderly manner, constituting a sort of delirium. During this kind of incomplete sleep the external sensations are not wholly at rest, hence impressions made on them may excite the most exaggerated impressions on the brain in the shape of dreams. So Descartes thought the bite of a flea to be the point of a sword. An uneasy position of the neck may give the idea of strangulation. An undigested supper may cause the sleeper to feel as if a heavy weight were resting on his stomach instead of *in* it. A person having a blister applied to his head dreamed that he was scalped by the Indians—a slight mistake! Many times our mental work marks our dreams. The minister writes sermons, the student solves problems, and the doctor decides what to do with his patient. These things



---

dreamed out are often better done than when we are awake. But this sort of night-work rapidly wears us out, because it keeps the mind at work when it is already over-weary ; and, however correct those solutions are which we seem to sleep out, they show that the tired head needs rest or a change of occupation.

#### SLEEP AFFECTED BY OCCUPATION.

Persons of much mental activity are more likely to be wakeful than those given to manual labor, while the former need more sleep, for the head-work expends nervous force more rapidly than that of the hands. Solomon says, "Much study is weariness to the flesh ;" and the kind of weariness which comes from an overworked brain with too little sleep is the worst kind to bear, and the various nervous affections which arise thereby often make the sufferer very inconsistent and unreasonable. The "blue Monday" of the minister is occasioned by the intense intellectual and emotional life of the previous day, which prevented his sleeping well the succeeding night. To be sure, we often get so weary in body and spirit that it takes more than one night to rest us "all right." But if we get a good rest the first night, we are not blue and tired the next day, but sensible and full of courage that we shall soon be rested. Ministerial labors would be less wearing if the last Sabbath service were held at an earlier hour, so that the head could "cool off" and get quiet, and thus be ready for sleep at bed-time. But now that evening worship must be



at 8 o'clock (the genteel time for fashionable amusements), instead of "early candlelight," or, better still, 5 o'clock, as of old, it must be near "the small hours" before a minister who has thrown his whole mental and spiritual force into his subject can get ready to sleep. So, too, his hearers, if they are held in head and heart to the point of devotional interest till 9 o'clock, certainly are not ready to go to sleep at that good old-fashioned hour for retiring.

Age, temperament, and constitutional tendencies make a difference with the amount of sleep required, and with the facility with which we can turn to it. Some kinds of mental labor expend nervous force more rapidly than others. The *purely* intellectual is less exhaustive than when combined with the emotional. Scientific persons live longer, sleep better, and are much more healthful and happy than those who belong to what is called "the literary world." The former seem to be cooled, steadied, and strengthened by the study of Nature as she is. The latter live more in the ideal, the imaginative, and so write "out of their own heads."

The finest descriptions of scenery, of love, of domestic peace, are not usually written by those who enjoy it, but by those who long for it. Hence their pictures are not of what is about them, but of their own intense inner life, which burns too brilliantly to burn long or steadily. So, if we had more good sleepers, the world would lack many a thrilling romance, and many a reader would miss a sleepless night.



## MOTHERS WORN WITH NIGHT CARE.

There have been varied opinions as to whether men or women need more sleep ; but it does not seem that sex can decide the question, but rather temperament, age, occupation, state of health, etc. It is said that women bear watching better than men, and it is no doubt true, often, that their more intense affectional nature, their more sensitive organization, will enable them to keep awake more easily ; but these very conditions make them really need more sleep, in that they expend life-force more rapidly. The cares of maternity wear more from the loss of sleep, which often comes with them, than from any other cause. So, if I were writing to husbands, I should say : If you want to keep your wives fresh and cheery, try to lighten their night care, or plan for them a morning nap by being mother *pro tem.* when the little ones have kept them awake. Women, while nursing, need much sleep, if they are of delicate organization, otherwise they grow morbid, sensitive, and depressed ; have a pain between the shoulders, in the back of the head and neck. For these pains they try all manner of plasters, braces, washes, etc., when more sleep would best mend the weak place. Mothers often tell me that since the birth of such a child, or such a siege of family sickness years ago, they have been poor sleepers. The facts are these : they have been kept awake when sickness, sorrow, or solicitude, rendered them oversensitive, till their nervous system became so irritable, that,



when there was no longer need to keep awake, they could not sleep.

#### GROWING CHILDREN.

Mothers often fail to realize how much sleep their growing children need, and so when they are sick or out of sorts give them all kinds of remedies but the right one.

There is a theory that the bones grow only when we are asleep. If this be true, those boys who wish to "increase in wisdom and stature" had better go to bed in season. Every mother has noticed that her children have their times of growing tall and then of growing stout, and that they are much more sensitive and likely to be sickly when growing lengthwise than when growing breadthwise. While the former changes are being perfected, a larger amount of both bone and nerve matter must be furnished than for the latter. Hence, when your children are "running up tall," as you say, keep them from heavy work and late hours. If they complain of being tired, seem lazy or irritable, encourage them to sleep, as this is

"Man's rich restorative, his balmy bath,  
That supple, lubricates, and keeps in play  
The various movements of that nice machine  
Which needs such frequent periods of repair."

When we are weary in body or brain, whether worn by manual or mental labor, sleep is a *safe* and sure panacea. Not the sleep which drunkenness, narcotics, and cordials bring, but such as Nature gives to those who invite and accept her gifts.



## PHASES OF SLEEP.

The wise man has well described the various kinds of sleep. So, he says of him who walks in wisdom's way: "When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid; yea, and thy sleep shall be sweet." Of the sluggard: "Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep." Again: "The sleep of the laboring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much; but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep."

How often have we all, when excited by joy or sorrow, felt the truth and beauty of these words: "I sleep, but my heart waketh!" Sleep is sometimes seasoned by the sweet sense that the beloved are near, and sometimes with the sad sense of separation. When looking on the placid face of a sleeping infant, where smiles play so sweetly, we may easily fancy angels are whispering in its ears, but the sleeping sufferer has suppressed anguish written there.

There is the dead sleep which dissipation induces, the sluggish state which a full stomach and a lazy head invites. There is the sighing sleep, which comes tardily, but comes at last to the grief-worn spirit. And there is excessive joy, which puts to flight all desire for sleep. This goddess often says to the happy: "Burn on through midnight like the stars—ye have no need of me;" but to the wretched: "I will fold you in my mantle, and bury you in sweet oblivion till the morning comes."

In certain states of despair there lies a power which "draws down irresistibly the coverlet of sleep." The dis-



ciples slept in "the garden" just before their Lord was crucified, and the beloved Physician says of them that they were "sleeping for sorrow," and when Jesus admonished them "to watch and pray, lest they enter into temptation," he also added, as if in tender apology, "the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Deep grief often brings on that peculiar depression of vital force which invites sleep.

Hope is a tonic on which we can work with little food and little rest; but despair depresses all the life-energies, and hence much sleep is a messenger of mercy.

Solicitude makes us wakeful; head and heart are thinking, yearning to do something; but great sorrow proves often a sedative, so that the afflicted sometimes sleep more than usual, and then both body and brain are safe.

Those who are rendered sleepless by trouble, are liable to be thereby impaired, mentally or physically.

#### LACK OF SLEEP A CAUSE OF MENTAL DERANGEMENT.

The statistics of lunatic asylums show that want of sleep is the most frequent and immediate cause of insanity. As you look over the history of the inmates, and note the peculiar trials which have shattered their poor heads or hearts, you see that nothing has happened to them save what is common in the varied experiences of this life. Many have passed under the same rod, or a heavier one, and come out unharmed, even steadier and stronger for the chastisement. But these sad subjects, from bad habits or bad inheritance, seem to possess some peculiarity of nervous irritability; so when sleep, like a loving mother, would



---

soothe and save them, she can not. No doubt many might have been saved by judicious care at the right time. Needful work is an excellent solace for earthly sorrow. Hence we note that those burdened by labor and care bear grief best; not that their sensibilities are less acute, not from lack of enduring love, but because weary muscles lead to sleep, Nature's balmy bath, which soothes aching hearts as well as bodily pain. As the head which aches with thinking can only be cured by sleep, so the heart which thrills with agony needs to be soothed in the same way.

I am always sorry for those disappointed in early love, who are so at ease that they need not earn either food or raiment. Nothing to do but nurse their grief, till they grow broken in health and bitter in spirit. I am sorry, too, for those bereaved in maturer years, whose chief responsibility is in reference to their crape. Both classes are likely to grow nervous, sleepless, often incurably sick and sad, and sometimes insane. The danger of mental wreck from sorrow or care, comes more from wakefulness at night than from the heaviness of the load carried by day.

#### EFFECTS OF NIGHT WORK.

Those who work by night and sleep by day wear out more rapidly than others in proportion to the work they perform. For several years I have taken testimony as to this point from railroad conductors, telegraph operators, etc., and they all agree that, though they try to take all the sleep they need during the day, it is less refreshing, and that after a few years they feel the need of a change of work,



or rather of hours. As to why sleep is less sweet and sound when the sun shines, we can only say, God has set in order day and night, each for its purpose. We might suggest that light makes us sleep more lightly, that noise disturbs, and the sense that all the world is astir stirs the sleeper.

Some years since we went through the dark highways and by-ways of the Tamaqua coal-mines, where the work is kept up daily during the twenty-four hours. I said to one of the miners: "As it is just so dark here night and day, it makes no difference when you work?" To which the son of Erin replied: "Indade, miss, an' a man's constitution knows the difference amazin' quick." While conversing with the superintendent of the mines on this point, he told me the Irishman was correct; that the night-workmen were much more liable to sickness, and sooner failed in strength than those for the day, though they all had precisely the same work, and all came out of the mines alike, to eat and sleep.

I have no doubt that one reason why lawyers and men in public life so often resort to stimulus is to supply that sense of nervous exhaustion which comes from late hours in crowded court-rooms. By alcohol they make the brain burn most brilliantly, just as it should be quieting down for a good night's rest.

Our finest lecturers are, after a few months, worn and haggard, though seemingly having little care and but little mental labor; for often the same lecture goes from the ocean at the east to the "father of waters" in the west, with improvised modifications. And much of this wear is for the reason that after speaking the lecturer can not sleep till



---

midnight, or more often till into the small hours, and some not even till day dawns. Such think intensely, feel deeply, sleep lightly, and are wrecked early. Teachers who are earnest, progressive, and devoted to the interests of their pupils—their school cares are their “night thoughts,” and long evenings and little sleep are the result. Many of our most useful mental and moral workers are laid aside from their labors far too early, because they do not take sleep enough. Manual labor, combined with enough mental to give it interest, is far less exhausting to the nervous system than brain work alone. Hence those engaged in the latter require the most sleep, but seldom take it. The couch invites those weary in body, and sleep ensues; but those weary in brain are often excited, intoxicated by their intensity of thought, and think they do not need it. Many a weary head finds that it can not rest, though it tries “ever so hard” to do so. When abnormal activity of the brain has been induced by over-exertion, the thoughts run on, as if human machinery went by force of acquired velocity, instead of being quieted and controlled by the will.

#### FAILURE OF HEALTH FROM INSUFFICIENT SLEEP.

Some one says that “men of mind are mountains whose heads are sunned long ere the rest of earth.” But these same mountains are often clouded early. Prior to this shadow we often see an activity of brain, an excitability of the nervous system, combined too often with an irritability of temper, which tells the physician that trouble is near, while the prospective patient fancies his health to be



as firm as ever; but all at once his system gives out—his head will not think, his stomach will not digest, he is restless and wretched. Many sad illustrations of this class have we seen in our infirmary during the last twenty years. Among these was a man, once of giant frame and iron nerve, who with proper care would have retained his vigor till four-score years, but at half that age found himself a poor, miserable dyspeptic, shattered in mind and body. Year after year he had worked eighteen hours out of twenty-four. He went to his mill at 3 o'clock in the morning and stayed till 10 o'clock at night, and then sat up and read for two or three hours, so that he had but four hours sleep out of the twenty-four, and often but *one*. Thus he went on year after year, maintaining that "nothing hurt him," and a perfect marvel to all around him. But at length his memory began to fail; his mind became anxious and fearful, his extremities numb, and he too timid to stay in a room alone, by night or day. We found body and brain rickety beyond repair, and so passed him on to the insane asylum.

Many years since there was an early-rising mania. Philosophers wrote and poets sung of its virtues. Had they given us, also, sermons and sonnets on the benefits of early retiring, we should then have had both sides of the question. But the result was, that many concluded that time spent in sleep was wasted, provided they could so goad their energies as to keep awake. While midnight oil was consumed, the lamp of life was being exhausted when it should have been being replenished. We have all



---

our fixed quantum of life-force, of vital fluid, which we may use more or less rapidly at our will. There are various ways in which we may waste this fountain, and want of sleep is one.

To retire at 9 o'clock—once the old-fashioned hour for grown folks—is now too early for children, even. Society calls us away from home just when we most need its quiet. We dress for parties just when we should “wrap the drape-ry of our couch about us and lie down to pleasant dreams.” If our friends are worthy of our attention, let us give them our best thoughts, our sane moments—not the products of a brain exhausted by the labors of the day, and then exhilarated by the dissipation of the night. The influences of these nightly gatherings are more deleterious to the young than to those matured in body.

“Late sitting up has turned her roses white :

Why went she not to bed ?—because 't was night.”

The bloom of many a young girl has withered in the gayety of her first winter in society ; and though from summer to summer it may be for the time “restored” by a trip to the mountains, or the sea-side, or a Water Cure, it soon settles into a sickly yellow, quite past “freshening up.” Such may well say, as did one looking in the glass, “How *shallow* I look !” when she meant to say *sallow*.

Those overtaxed in early life are slow of cure and seldom have much power of endurance. Such need more sleep, more rest, in all after years. An increased tendency to sleep is a hopeful sign in nervous invalids. Dim eyes, dull



---

ears, and super-sensitive nerves are often improved, cured even, by this alone, where there is no organic disease.

#### HINTS TO THE SLEEPLESS.

“But how shall we wakeful ones find the way to sleep?” asks one—yes, many, I fear. First, let us remember the lesson of our youth, which said that “the day was for labor, and the night for sleep and repose.” When the open fire, a pine knot, or a tallow candle were the only facilities for a nightly illumination, the temptation to late sitting up was much less than now, when the brilliancy of gas or kerosene invites us to sit up at night that we may enjoy its exhilarating splendor. I have been interested to notice how music, gay colors, beautiful pictures, and bright lights keep us wide awake. Place the same persons in a room, and with but little about it to attract the eye, and they fall into easy, quiet chit-chat, and soon begin to yawn, and by mutual consent retire early, saying: “Somehow I feel sleepy to-night.”

What can we say that is new on the necessity of ventilating sleeping apartments? Not any thing, but many are still afraid of night air, damp air, and cold air, forgetting that of all air, that is worst which they have breathed over and over again; and so they get up with a headache and a bad taste in the mouth, simply from bad air breathed during the night. If the house has none of the modern means for perfect ventilation, then have an opening in two sides of the room, or have one window down at the top and raised at the bottom, and so secure a current of air.



---

Those inclined to wakefulness will find a cold drip-sheet rubbing for a minute, or a towel bath before retiring, to prove a most happy and healthful anodyne. Cold foot baths for five minutes in the evening are also useful. If the head is hot and the feet cold, lie down and take a head bath at seventy degrees for five minutes, having the back of the head in the water and the feet in a hot foot bath at the same time. A wet napkin around the head will often suffice. A cool sitz bath for fifteen minutes, with a cold cloth to the head and the feet in hot water, equalizes the circulation and quiets the nervous system so as to induce sleep. A full bath at ninety-eight degrees, for twenty minutes or half an hour, has often cured the most obstinate cases of sleeplessness, provided the habits of the day were healthful. A brisk walk in the open air will often quiet the head and tire the body, so that sweet sleep will ensue. Then, too, let all subjects of thought, amusements, and employments for the evening be of a kind least exciting. Finally, "Somnus lets his poppies fall most plentifully on those having a cool head, an empty stomach, tired muscles, a quiet conscience, and warm feet."

Jesus has promised to give "his beloved sleep"—sleep so sweet, that at the awakening there shall be no aching of the head or heart because of the labors, the sorrows, or the sins of our earthly days. Until then, let us each, in our small way, try to give to our beloved sleep, as the best solace for the past, the best source of strength for the future.



## INDIGESTION.

---

I CAN NOT close my words to women without considering Indigestion and Constipation. Though not classed among those special infirmities which first prompted me to write, still they are so closely allied to them, that to cure the one, we must correct the other.

Derangements of the stomach and bowels are usually caused by habits under our own control, yet when long continued they induce other diseases which are hard to cure. Tight, or improperly adjusted dress, interferes seriously with the nutritive functions. There is much important work to be done just beneath the lower ribs, for which ample room is required. These having no bony attachment in front, are easily compressed, even after mature years. If not thrown inward by external pressure, they are often held fixed by the tight belt, so that they can not play freely upward and outward, as they should, at each inspiration. Now this slight oscillation aids the organs beneath in the performance of their duties. We might add, that restriction just in the region of the diaphragm also interferes with the action of the lungs; hence, slow congestion, incipient consumption begins here. Poor digestion and imperfect nutri



---

tion, also favor tubercular deposit, and thus furnish the first step toward incurable disease of the lungs.

But on this point we will not dwell.

#### WHAT SHALL WE EAT?

A good old divine once said, "Eat with a cheerful and thankful heart, and think it won't hurt you, and I guess it won't." This is a good answer for over-anxious ones, who expend time and nerve-power in wondering *what* they shall eat, and then worry as to whether it will digest.

After having settled upon what course of diet to pursue, do not talk about it, farther than to praise the cook, if possible. To say grace before meals, and grumble while eating, is no way to bring the blessing asked. Let the conversation at table be of a free, easy, cheerful character. Fretting and fault-finding impair appetite and digestion, while a cheerful, grateful spirit helps both. We can not give any system of diet which is adapted to every one. Food must vary with climate, age, and occupation. What is best at one period in life may not be at another.

The young, as a usual rule, thrive best on milk, vegetables, fruit, and farinaceous food.

Those in advanced years, or persons recovering from severe illness, ordinarily feel better with a more stimulating diet, meat, etc. When having much responsible care, anxiety, or night-watching, we need food for the time which supplies nerve-power, as steak, eggs, oysters, fish—that which the chemists say contains phosphorus.

If we have taken to sedentary habits, and the bowels are



becoming torpid, then coarse bread and acid fruits should predominate. Those of simple habits with unperverted tastes, having their desires in subjection to their intelligence, possess often an innate sense of what is good food for them. "The willing and the obedient shall eat the good of the land," for to them is given the power to relish and digest what the system requires. Such, with all their apparent self-denial, really enjoy the pleasures of their plain table more than the epicure, and are certainly happier after.

Invalids with slow digestion are able to take more food at two than three meals a day, thus giving the stomach more time for rest. So, also, as years advance, and mind and body are more quiet, eating twice, with seven hours between, will sustain the system best, as then merely the *waste* of the body needs to be repaired.

In youth, material for both growth and waste is required, and the more active the habits, the more rapid the waste. The young need to be well nourished, even when their full stature has been attained, because the system is not consolidated until later years. Digestion, assimilation, and excretion go on more rapidly than later in life; hence, such need the three full meals, while two will suffice for those past forty, unless they have very active habits, or much manual labor. If there be "faintness of the stomach" for lack of supper, it may be relieved by a piece of bread, a cup of broma or gruel, or even a glass of water. Those suffering from a tendency to acidity or flatulence, will find dry food preferable at all times.



---

Roast-beef, steak without butter or gravy, dry toast, unleavened cakes, and soft boiled eggs, eaten slowly, without taking any fluid at the meal, is advisable.

If warm drink is required, let a small cup of breakfast-tea be taken at the *close* of the meal, rather than while eating. If the stomach is sensitive, drink moderately of cold water a half hour or so before eating, and two or three hours after; or if long unused to cold drinks, it will be necessary to begin with a wine-glass full, or even less. Never take so much as to induce local pain, or a general sense of chilliness. If there be great thirst, water may be taken frequently, but in small quantities.

In health, a glass or two of fresh water is always an excellent tonic for the stomach when it is empty, time being given for its absorption before eating. It improves the appetite, helps the breakfast or indeed any meal to relish without other drink, and prompts the liver and kidneys to healthful action.

Corpulent persons have an excess of fatty tissue and a lack of muscular fiber, hence little strength in proportion to their size. Such are often relieved by Banting's system of diet, in which food containing sugar, starch, and animal oil are avoided.

#### CAUSES OF DYSPEPSIA.

Many have poor appetite or bad digestion, when the fault is not in their food. Excessive anxiety, or overwork of body and brain, may take away the relish for even favorite dishes, or the ability to digest them comfortably.



We must have nerve-power to carry on the nutritive function; and if it has been exhausted through the mind or muscle, the stomach will lack a supply, and hence can not do its work well.

Those who are very weary should rest twenty or thirty minutes, both before and after eating, the length of time varying according to the severity of manual labor or intensity of mental application which their business requires. In case of chronic invalidism, perfect rest for a half hour or more after eating, followed by moderate exercise, will allow the stomach the best chance to do its work.

When there is nausea and vomiting, either from uterine sympathy or from debility of the stomach, to rest on the back for half an hour after food is taken, will frequently save the meal and secure good digestion. Mothers, exhausted by prolonged nursing, by family cares, suffer from loss of appetite and indigestion. Such should not be restricted in food, but have rest, change of scene, and a generous diet. Students, ministers, and members of the bar often become dyspeptic through excess of brain-work, when their habits are otherwise healthful. Such should understand that as the nutritive power diminishes, so also the ability to endure either thought or emotion.

Intense mental or spiritual activity induces waste, which must be supplied by good food, well digested, or a headache, neuralgia, distress of the stomach, or great depression of mind and body, will ensue. Fasting will promote mental and spiritual life in those addicted to excess in eating, but not otherwise.



---

Those imperfectly nourished may burn brightly for a short time, but soon go out in almost hopeless darkness.

The saddest cases of dyspepsia that I have ever seen, were among those who had taken to some dietetic extreme, in the hope of cure. The less they ate the more deluded they became, the more they suffered, till the skin, eye, and whole bearing reminded one painfully of our poor imprisoned soldiers, who became imbecile from inanition. As we said above, indigestion may be induced by any kind of over-work; but that of the brain is most severe, most difficult of cure, because nerve-power impaired is more difficult to restore than wasted muscular tissue. Many a noble, self-denying, self-supporting student, has established life-long invalidism while in school, by studying too hard, with food too limited in variety and amount. We might dwell on late suppers, eating between meals, highly seasoned food, pastry, rich cake, strong coffee, and green tea, as among the causes of indigestion; but so much has been said against these, that no words of ours will be of service to this class. They are joined to their idols, I fear. Dyspepsia may arise from inflammation of the lining membrane of the stomach, induced by improper food, eating hurriedly, or at irregular intervals; also from repelled eruption, or a constitutional tendency to disease of the mucous surfaces.

Again, the trouble may be located in the nerves that supply the stomach, which may have been caused by over-work or stimulation. Sometimes we find both these phases, that is, mucous and nervous dyspepsia combined. To de-



fine the peculiar characteristics of these classes would be to perplex the reader, and prompt the patient to watch pulse and tongue, which would be very bad business for a dyspeptic. The less *they* think of their symptoms the better.

#### TREATMENT.

The first step toward the cure of dyspepsia is the correcting of such habits as induced the disease. There is no system of diet, no course of medication, which can alone overcome indigestion. The impression that there is "something to take," which will set the digestive apparatus all right, has led to a great amount of injudicious medication. As the phases of this disease are so varied, we can not give any definite course of treatment, but merely some suggestions, which, together with the above hints, may palliate, perhaps cure. Gentle friction across the stomach and liver for five minutes, given by an attendant within a half-hour after each meal, while the patient lies upon the back, will promote digestion in feeble persons; or, later, two or three hours after eating, walk erect with shoulders thrown back, take full inspirations, and then hold the breath for a few seconds; at the same time percuss over the sides in the region of the floating ribs, with the hands alternately. If there is pain in the region of the stomach or liver, about three hours after eating, hot fomentations for twenty minutes, followed by a cool sitz bath or the wet girdle, will prove serviceable.

In severe dyspepsia the skin is dry, sallow, inactive, with



---

a decided tendency to chilliness. In such cases the wet sheet pack for about forty-five minutes daily, followed with the drip sheet, is beneficial, if the patient becomes warm in it, and remains so after; otherwise, warm baths, vapors, or Turkish baths, with cool pours or cold plunge after, taken two or three times a week, are better.

When food lies undigested, inducing distress of the stomach, it should be thrown off by drinking in quick succession a half-dozen glasses of warm water; or when paroxysms of pain occur from acidity, they may be relieved by a single glass of hot water, which dilutes the acrid secretions, and acts also as an anti-spasmodic.

Moderate exercise, mental diversion, cheerful surroundings, and good sleep, are indispensable aids to the cure of such diseases as we have enumerated in this chapter.



## CONSTIPATION.

---

### CAUSES.

TO prevent or cure constipation we must correct whatever is wrong in the condition of the stomach or liver. A good old doctor said truly, "the bile is Nature's physic." Hence, if the liver is torpid, we must expect the bowels will be also. The alimentary canal requires a proper amount of bulk to stimulate it to action; therefore, food should not be so concentrated as to allow too little waste. For instance, fine flour,—white sugar, if used to the exclusion of fruit, vegetables, and unbolted wheat, will induce constipation.

Fæces are made up of the waste material of the body, excreted within the colon; also of undigested food, like the skin and seed of fruits. Hence, the stool may be scanty in amount because there may be too little indigested material to give bulk, or the old worn-out elements are not excreted from the blood. Sometimes persons who are bloodless and have poor appetite have very little excrementitious matter. They take in a very scanty supply of new material, and so the old is thrown off slowly. In other cases the proper amount of material is eliminated from the blood, but the



---

fæces are retained too long in the alimentary canal, till the watery portions are reabsorbed into the system. One fruitful cause of this form of constipation is the tight dressing which restricts abdominal respiration, and deprives the whole twenty-four feet of intestines of that motion which is so important to maintain a healthful action of the bowels ; also the muscles which form the abdominal walls, lack due exercise and lose their tone.

Heavy, unsupported skirts, rest upon the bowels and deprive them of their natural position and normal motion. The corsets of modern days—"so loose," "so easy,"—are doing more harm to the abdominal viscera than to those of the chest, though both suffer from their close embrace. They are never worn tight, so their subjects say ; still, as they are not supported by the shoulders they must rest upon the abdomen, restricting the free motion of the muscles without and of the organs within.

If the nervous system is exhausted by overwork, constipation is likely to ensue, even though the labor be active in kind, and the other habits are correct. The brain must impart a due amount of vital force ; without this, even the bowels can not perform their function properly.

Persons intensely absorbed in their duties, fail to note the descent of the faecal matter, and it becomes impacted, the rectum over-distended, and it is retained there for many days.

Sometimes for want of requisite conveniences, or freedom to use them, the stool is delayed when it would have easily escaped ; but afterward it becomes dry, hard, and rests in



the pelvis, giving a sense of discomfort without power to evacuate.

#### CURE.

From what has been said of causes, you will readily see how hopelessly foolish and positively injurious it is to expect to cure constipation with cathartics.

These, long continued, irritate the stomach and often the whole length of the alimentary canal. The label on the top of a box of Brandreth's pills used to read "good in all cases, dose from two to twenty." This tells in brief the indiscriminate way in which patent medicines are taken by those who dream if they have a daily evacuation they are on the road to health, without reference to the means employed. In many instances there are no fæces in the bowels, and those remedies merely stimulate a watery exudation. Often the patient is feeble and could not afford this drain. Those who digest but little can not supply the material for a daily evacuation without a sense of prostration.

Many persons consider themselves bilious, and medicate accordingly, when their sallow skin is the result of poor digestion, and poor blood induced by nervous exhaustion. The first step toward curing constipation is to give due attention to the stomach and liver, as suggested in the preceding chapter.

Clothing should be loose, and so suspended that a full inspiration can always be taken without a sense of restriction; thus imparting motion to every organ, from the top



---

of the chest to the base of the pelvis. Otherwise we are dead, or dying for want of air. For further suggestions in regard to dress, see chapter on Prolapsus Uteri.

The voluntary respiratory exercises therein suggested, are also useful in case of constipation. Friction—deep, slow, steady—across the region of the stomach and liver, given by an assistant, the patient lying on the back, is excellent when the upper section of the digestive organs is torpid; or, if the lower bowels are sluggish, a circular motion corresponding to the direction of the colon is serviceable; also kneading, deep and strong, though not with sufficient pressure to give pain or even a sense of discomfort, is an excellent aid. Regularity as to time of evacuating the bowels is important. In the morning soon after breakfast is best. Remember this physical need, and if inclined to delay, encourage expulsion by quick, deep, and rapid inspirations and expirations. Do not sit and strain at stool, but rather walk briskly to and fro in the fresh air, if possible, for a few moments; or, if employed, keep the necessity in mind, and send the vital force in that direction, by thought and slight effort. This function, as well as any other, requires both nerve and muscular power for its accomplishment. Those of sedentary habits and active minds often fail to supply them. If constipation is owing to a sluggish state of the lower bowel, then an injection of a pint or two of tepid water will secure an evacuation; but if these are long continued, or if the feces have not reached this point, they are of little avail.



## RESULTS OF CONTINUED CONSTIPATION.

When the bowels fail to perform their appropriate duty in freeing the system of waste material, then the other organs of excretion have an excess of work.

The kidneys are taxed, the skin is oppressed and discolored by dead and diseased matter, which should have been removed by *faecal* evacuations.

The odor from the person is fetid, the face sallow or marred with pimples, the surface of the body dry, scaly, or covered with eruptions. The foundation for permanent invalidism is often laid during school days. A busy brain, inactive body, and want of thought in reference to the needs of the system, all tend to induce torpid bowels. To increase muscular exercise while the mind is overworked, will rather aggravate than relieve the trouble. Constipation is not apt to be considered a serious trouble in its early stages, because other organs struggle to free the system, and hence for a time the person seems very well. But as months and years go on, the whole system becomes involved more or less seriously in the general derangement. Pain in the head, sleeplessness, languor, mental depression, and a complication of local troubles which involve the pelvic organs are likely to ensue.

Drastic cathartics, straining at stool, bowels habitually loaded, are liable to induce inflammation of the rectum, fissures or cracks at the anus, hemorrhoids or piles. All these are most painful affections and difficult of cure. The latter are formed by deposit of fatty tissue from continued



---

inflammation, or by veins enlarged by long congestion. By overcoming constipation, the use of sitz baths, and enemata taken on retiring, of one half-pint of water or mucilage, to be retained, they may be relieved, perhaps cured. So long as the liver is torpid the hemorrhoidal veins will be congested, and piles can only be palliated, not cured. When these tumors burst, and to any extent bleed, a surgical operation will be required to effect a perfect cure.



## MENOPAUSE, OR CHANGE OF LIFE

---

### GROWING OLD GRACEFULLY.

THE period of menstrual decline is an important one in the life of woman, and may truly be called "the critical age." This well passed, and she may have a second career, less brilliant than her first, but not less beautiful, speaking after the manner of the spirit. When a wise head, a warm heart, and comfortable health combine, there is much to be done, much to be enjoyed, even when our early enthusiasm in reference to this life has all come and gone. Some one, commenting on the delicacy of our young ladies, remarked, "We must take good care of the old ones, for we shall never have any more." The object of this chapter is to show how we can have some more, and have life with them not only endured but enjoyed. The proverb, "Old men for counsel, young men for war," is in fact, though not in form, equally applicable to women. Our young women have beauty, activity, enthusiasm. The old should have patience, forgiveness, wisdom; so as to guide the younger through the same sorrows which they have experienced and whereby they have ripened. I am



sorry to see women try to conceal from themselves and their friends the fact that they are growing old. Why, if we use well this life, the Lord will give us another—a better.

The menopause tells us that we are looking toward the sunset. But is there not a new and brighter morning in that land where there is no night, where none are sick, none are sad, and all are satisfied? But some one says, "It is not the dying I dread; it is the living old, faded, and forlorn." But you need never be thus. To be sure, the charms of youth will fly with the years to which they belong, but the good Spirit will implant in us other graces, if we ask for and cultivate them.

A young miss, when looking at several women who were nearing their fiftieth year, and listening to their conversation, remarked aside, "How nice those ladies look; how well they converse; they don't act green, like us girls;" and then added, "When I write romance, my heroines will be old ladies." Truly, the great Father is good. Every age and place has its charms, its compensations. Spring and summer do not gather all the gifts that crown the year. So of life. The lily and the rose will come and go, but they do not comprise all the beauty of the changing seasons or of growing character. But why do I dwell on the spiritual when writing of that which pertains to the physical? Because heart and flesh are apt to fail together, and each can help up, or hold down the other. During the age of which we are speaking, there is a great tendency to mental depression, owing to constitutional changes, and



sometimes because beauty is going, and no more babies are coming.

#### PRECAUTION.

As women approach the period for menstrual decline, they should take care to keep their general health up to the highest possible point; because, if once down, it is more difficult to rally than at any other age. If there is a constitutional tendency to morbid action, it is likely to take to the weakest organ. Hence, many die of disease of the lungs, liver, or some of the varied forms of scrofulous affections, between the fortieth and fiftieth years. Therefore women should be impressed with the truth that dangers await them, while at the same time they should comprehend the fact that with proper care they can usually escape and pass through with comfortable health. Unfortunately, it often happens that they give little or no intelligent attention to the subject, until serious disturbance has occurred, which it is hard to cure. When the critical period will begin it is impossible to say, as it varies from thirty-five to fifty-five, although the usual age is forty-five. Most women, as they approach their fortieth year, feel their "natural force abating," a little more languid during and after menstruation, and, if overworked at the time, do not feel as well for a month after.

These are admonitions to take life easier, to be especially careful about over-exertion during the monthly flow, for thereby it will be rendered too profuse or too prolonged. Sometimes we notice a peculiar sensitiveness of the nervous



system, a tendency to headache, neuralgia, wakefulness, over-anxiety about trifles, before there is any derangement of the "monthlies," which are notes of warning.

#### VARIED PHASES OF CESSATION.

There are many different modes of the termination of the menstrual function. Sometimes a gradual diminution of the amount, in others a succession of floodings, occasionally one terminal flooding, more rarely a sudden cessation. The most common method is a flow irregular in amount at irregular intervals, longer or shorter than the usual interim. I have known a few instances where it did not return after the birth of a child late in life, and a few where it ceased suddenly without any local or general disturbance. But in most cases the flow is irregular, from one to seven years. During this time there is more tendency to disease, debility, and mental depression. Soon as the monthly tribute becomes more profuse or prolonged than usual, or even if there is no excess of flow, only an unusual sense of prostration after it, then great care should begin. Many, by neglecting these symptoms, become so reduced by loss of blood that it takes years to recover; some remain always enfeebled, and others die of uterine hemorrhage.

#### TREATMENT DURING MENOPAUSE.

Coo. sitz baths, and vaginal injections while in them, are always good when the flow induces a sense of exhaustion. For directions for their use, see chapter on Menorrhagia. Where there is a tendency to cold feet, use the hot foot



bath, and keep the head cool with wet compresses. Also the wet girdle is of great advantage here. If these do not suffice to check the flow, then keep on compresses of cold water, or ice-water, over the pelvis. The bowels should be freed by an injection, and then one of a half-pint of cold water taken into the rectum after, to retain. For vaginal injections, alum-water or a teaspoonful of tannin in a half-pint of water, would be valuable astringents.

There may be chronic uterine congestion, or some other form of local disease, which may require special attention; if so, then the remedies above mentioned will be safe palliatives, but may not be sufficient. To dwell on these morbid conditions would only perplex. An intelligent physician attending the case must decide and direct when these exist.

After the cessation of the menses, an acrid leucorrhea often appears, making the vagina and vulva very uncomfortable from a constant sense of irritation. In many cases, if it is allowed to continue, the vagina becomes constricted from continued inflammation of the mucous surfaces. This often occurs when there has been no disease in previous years.

It could be prevented in most cases by vaginal injections in sitz baths, or of castile soapsuds once or twice a day. If this is not sufficient, some form of medicated injection may be required. For directions, see chapter on Leucorrhea. In some cases the disease is so severe as to require more vigorous means, which we can not well advise without personal attention.



SUBSEQUENT DISCOMFORTS.

After menstruation has ceased, several months, sometimes years elapse, before the nervous and circulatory system becomes quiet and settled. Creeping chills, flashes of heat, followed by perspiration, annoy, as if the powers of the system which had been hitherto expended on the uterine functions were rushing to and fro making mischief, not having found their normal action. The nervous influence which used to prompt this flow is still in force and induces pain in the head, back, and pelvis. This often simulates some local infirmity, and makes the poor victim suppose she must have some severe uterine disease. The bladder and rectum being supplied with vessels and nerves from the same section, are often the seat of irritation, and this sense of discomfort is mistaken for a diseased condition. If severe remedies are used, they aggravate rather than allay the symptoms. The suppression of uterine action affects the portal circulation, and hence there is often disturbance of the liver, indigestion, constipation. But with simple diet and good habits this will pass away. If, on the contrary, the sense of pressure at the stomach, the bitter taste in the mouth, prompt to the trial of a variety of patent remedies, such usually get *into* trouble faster than they get out. Many times the increased or irregular action of the heart is supposed to indicate organic disease, when it is merely sympathetic with some other organ. I have in mind an array of fidgety women, at the uncertain age, who have worried me by night and by day with their incurable in-



firmities, until I almost wished their fears were true, so that I could send them home to die, instead of keeping them until they got well. But I fancy I hear some of the sisterhood saying, "We understand all about the symptoms, now; what we want is to know how to get rid of them."

Well, some can be lessened, some cured, some must be endured. Those of the nervous system are usually more disagreeable than dangerous. If, after consulting your family physician, you find they belong to this class, the less you say about them the better for yourself and for all your friends. Do not worry, and so wear yourself and others by dwelling on them. Patience and palliatives will cure them, if you don't pet them too much. The sensations incident to this period are peculiarly trying to patient, physician, and friends. As no one can *talk* women out of the crooked, crotchety, crazy notions which sometimes possess them at this age, it will be of no use for me to try to erase them with the pen.

#### PALLIATIVE TREATMENT.

There are simple methods which greatly soothe certain symptoms, and at the same time conduce to a return to health and strength. As the skin has now to perform much of the labor once accomplished by the uterus, it is important that it be kept in an active condition. If there is feverish excitement and nervous irritability, a full bath at from ninety-five to one hundred degrees, a half-hour, with the head sponged with cold water, is very beneficial, and if taken just before retiring will often secure a good night's sleep for those



who suffer much from wakefulness. The bath not only removes the excretions from the skin, but acts as a sedative on the nervous system, and seems to absorb, so to speak, that morbid irritability arising from an undue activity of the mind at the expense of the body. Of course, the bath should be followed by brisk friction, so that *not* a chill, but a pleasant sense of grateful warmth should follow. If there be heat in the head, keep on the wet compress for the night. A wet-sheet pack of half or three-quarters of an hour with a drip-sheet rubbing after, at ninety degrees, one minute, will answer a good purpose in place of the full bath, keeping a cold compress to the head while in the pack, and after it, if the heat requires. The periods of perspiration act as a safety-valve for the system, and save from internal disease. The sense of debility and discomfort which follows can be relieved by a quick cold bath with towel, or in a tub, as is convenient. If they are so frequent and profuse as to be prostrating, then sponge off with salt and water, or alcohol and water, and rub briskly with a towel. If there is much heat and pain in the head, take head baths at seventy-five degrees, five minutes. When there is a tendency to mental depression, the diversion of travel and out-door exercise are much better than the excitement of ordinary social life, as the former invites to sleep, which is the great safeguard against insanity from real or imaginary troubles. If the cessation is sudden and followed by plethora, pressure of blood to the head, then the diet should be simple—coarse food and fruit; avoid fat meat gravies, or much of butter and sugar.

Keep the bowels free, feet warm, and head cool, by



cheerful, active occupation; cool sitz baths of half or three-quarters of an hour, reduced in temperature while sitting in them, with cold to the head, and feet, if cold, in hot water, are valuable. Make the skin and kidneys active by daily bathing and free water-drinking. Use no coffee, and but little tea. Keep mentally quiet and take as much moderate exercise as possible.

#### ADVANCING YEARS.

Women of business, as years advance, are apt to be over-anxious about their home duties, and feel that they must keep about and "see to things" just as they have always done, that they can not trust either grown-up daughters or hired girls with their affairs, and so forfeit their health for years to come (if not their lives), when both might have been saved by "discretion," which "is the better part of valor." Those accustomed to manual labor, and who enjoy it, pass this trying period (if they do not overwork) much better than those women who are so "well to do" that they are not prompted to active duties.

Now and then we meet one, whose house of brown stone is so finished and furnished as to leave no want, real or imaginary, unsupplied, nothing better to expect, and where servants and handmaids allow little occasion for self-help.

Still, the mistress of the mansion is a miserable invalid, and her case is more tedious, more difficult to manage than that of the honest housewife who does her own work. The life led by this class is such as would exhaust the nervous system without developing the muscular, hence, when the



trying time comes, they are sadly out of balance, all nerves, and those running in the wrong direction, judging from the great magnitude and the extreme minuteness of their many miseries.

Those who have lived for gayeties which they can no longer endure or enjoy, are forlorn indeed when they reach this point in the life-journey which marks their decline. While, on the contrary, those who have devoted their days to earnest useful work, stand on the hill-top, take a pleasant retrospect of duties done, of things enjoyed, pause and rest till they have become adjusted to their changed physical condition, and then look cheerfully down the hill they are to descend, seeing deeds of kindness and works of love with which to keep their hands busy and their hearts warm, all the way to the brink of the river.

I know many who after months, even years of invalidism, at the changing period have settled into good health and good cheer. Some of them, as their home duties diminished, enlarged their sphere of active labor, helping such as need help, by public or private charity.

Childless women often ask, "What shall I do when I am old?" Those with children say, "What shall I do when my little ones are grown up and gone?"

I do not know what you will do, but of this I am sure, if you are in earnest to work, the strength will come, the way will open when you are ready, if you do not despise the small duties given for your development or discipline. Perhaps, instead of active labor the wise Father has lessons of patient resting and quiet waiting, for you to give to



those you most love—lessons which you could not illustrate in your best working days

A good spirit is always needed more than good deeds; hence, strong or weak, sick or well, by the help of the All-Merciful, declining days need never be useless.

---

### Conclusion. .

I close these pages with a pleasant feeling of having finished a long-promised series of letters to dear personal friends. They will seem often incomplete, but you who know so well the busy life I lead, will understand that it has been quite impossible for me to “read up” with the view of writing a book; hence, I have merely given, in familiar language, the results of my own personal observation.



LETTERS TO LADIES CONCERNING THEIR  
HEALTH.



## Preface to Letters to Ladies.

---

At various times have appeared, in Dr. Holbrook's *Journal of Hygiene and Herald of Health* papers from my pen entitled "Letters to Ladies," which many friends and others seem to think may have a permanent value and have urged me to print them in book form. This I have concluded to do as an addition to my other work, "Talks to My Patients," for which a new edition is now demanded. These letters have been carefully revised and such additions made as seemed to be required. The only regret I have is that the advice and suggestions they contain are longer necessary, but they appear to me quite as much so as when first written.

The letter to husbands may at first seem to be out of place. To my mind there should be no opposing interests between the sexes. Men and women are one, and that one humanity. Whatever helps one in the best sense, helps the other also. We draw each other upward or downward, according to the trend of our lives, "for none of us liveth to himself."

The final letter addressed to men and women may, I hope prove useful in helping both sexes to mitigate, perhaps avoid, many of the trials and infirmities of old age.

RACHEL B. GLEASON.

THE GLEASON SANITARIUM, ELMIRA, N. Y.,

*April, 1895.*



# LETTERS TO LADIES CONCERNING THEIR HEALTH.

---

## I.

### Little Things which affect Health.

LADIES: Health, whether to be *re-tained* or *re-gained*, depends much on little things, and these little things come largely under feminine care or control.

To ascertain the causes of woman's manifold physical disabilities, and the cure for the same, has been my constant thought, my steady work, for many years. During this time I have studied bodies more than books, so what I have to say will savor little of the library, more of everyday life. Hence, the suggestions gathered during my long sojourn among the sick sisterhood, will be given you, not in the style of scientific papers, but simply as motherly hints, health-wise. So you will please "play" that you are being written to by a familiar friend, and accept the "I" and the "you" the same as if in my own autograph instead of a printed sheet.

Those who reverence the body and rejoice in its strength and length of days, have been glad to note that statistics



show that the average length of human life is on the increase. But there is one class who are still out of the reach of sanitary helps, and the very class, too, who seem to be most within reach of them—that is, the wives and daughters belonging to the best of families—yes, and to the “very first families.”

The Cincinnati *Times* at one time compiled some curious statistics concerning American women between twenty and forty years of age. A table was given, founded upon the returns of burials of males and females between these ages in forty-five cemeteries situated in Ohio, Illinois and Michigan; the places of burial having been selected with due regard to their representative character. The figures from this table are: Males, 806; females, 1,289; showing that, at least in the West, 50 per cent. more women than men die between the ages of 20 and 40. The *Times* made still further deductions, as follows:

“1—That in the oldest yards of the country, in which the first settlers buried their dead, the number of those who died between twenty and forty years of age were the most nearly equally divided between the sexes, in many cases the males outnumbering the females; while in the new yards at the same places, the females greatly outnumber the males;

“2—That in private or select yards, where the upper classes bury exclusively, the number of female dead, during this period of life, is very greatly in excess of that of the males;



---

“3—That in yards where foreigners chiefly bury their dead, the males usually exceed the females during those ages.”

But not only do the “cities of the dead” in the West tell this tale of the frailty of women of this age, but those in Central New York, the very garden of the world, confirm the same sad story.

A few years ago, several of us were looking about leisurely in Mount Hope Cemetery, and when we were in the best part of the grounds my husband called attention to the fact that just about there we found more fine monuments to *young* wives and *only* daughters than to any other class. We then reviewed that section of the cemetery with reference to this point, and were surprised to find so large a proportion of these young women, ranging from eighteen to thirty years of age. The choice stones, so beautifully carved, told us the sleeper beneath had lived in a home of affection, intelligence and wealth.

Shakespeare says there are

“Tongues in trees, books in running brooks,  
Sermons in stones, and good in everything.”

Now, Rochester gravestones have given us a grave subject in more respects than one. As a city, Rochester may well be proud of its intelligence, and rejoice in its excellent health regulations. Then, too, it gets many a fresh breeze from Lake Ontario, only six miles to the north, and is neither large nor closely compact. The farming country about is so rich and extensive that for all classes food is



more abundant and of better quality than in most cities, large or small.

Then why are its women, who are so well-to-do in every other respect, so poorly off in health, in life-force, that they die in the beauty of girlhood or early womanhood?

But we will leave marble monuments, with their facts and figures, and talk of the invalid band whom we have served these many years. During this time we have heard more of "General Debility" among our ladies than of General Grant, even. And the worst of it is that the women who suffer under General Debility are not likely to be allowed to leave his service, unless some new health regulations are instituted for them.

It seems that increase of wealth has not brought increase of life or health for our women. Indulgent husbands and fond fathers furnish washerwomen, cooks, nurses and seamstresses to meet those family wants which were once met by the mother of the house, aided by growing daughters; and still, with all this help, our women are worn out with family cares, and fade and fail early, despite summer renovation at the springs, the seaside, or the mountain.

One husband tells me that his wife is "too delicate" to keep house, and as soon as she is recruited at the Sanitarium he thinks they will board. Another, that he thinks boarding does not agree with his wife, and when she is cured they will go to housekeeping. Now, I do not expect that either of these women, whether they keep house or



---

board, *will remain well when they get well*, unless we can permanently correct certain physical or mental habits, which had more to do with their chronic infirmities than their labor or their lack of it.

“Man is the architect of his own fortune,” we say; and so is woman of her own health. We can slowly and surely build up or rapidly demolish. In this age, so rife with fashion and folly, she does more of the latter than the former.

Despite the flood of physiological light, she is out from under the reign of health laws, and will seldom listen to the teachings of science. Hence, women are, in more ways than they need to be, the “weaker vessel.” It is true woman has her mental and physical peculiarities, which make her, in some respects, more sensitive, more impressible, more excitable than man; but in many cases these natural differences have been abnormally increased. Horace Greeley said of Thomas Carlyle that he had “nursed his oddities until they had become deformities.” We see many women who seem to have done the same; their peculiar impressibility of system, which *should* have been their grace has become a grievance to all those most nearly allied to them.

My worthy father, when in his eighty-first year, and still fresh and cheery, said that women’s constitutions had changed in his day. They used to be sick, but now they are only nervous; they used to get cross sometimes, but now they are only nervous; they used to get weak and tired, but now they are weary and nervous.



Some years ago Mrs. Childs told the story of an old lady who was sick, and had some peculiar symptoms which the attendants could not comprehend, and some one suggested that they might be nervous. "Oh, no," said the old lady, "that can't be, because I was born before nerves were in fashion!" Most of the women I meet were born *since* that time; however, to this rule there are some exceptions.

Among the photographs of friends I find two faces rich and ripe; one taken at fifty, the other at sixty years of age; one the mother of ten children, the other of thirteen; both of them hard working women, housekeepers and mothers, not in name merely, but in fact; and still these two faces are less expressive of wear and worry than that of many a woman at thirty years of age, who has had little strain on her nervous system. Faces like these strengthen our faith in the physical possibilities of womanhood, and shows that the modern wife might be like the one in the first Eden—a helpmeet, a suitable assistant. Then why is she so very often sickly, sensitive, and so sentimental that her husband don't know what to do with her, and so takes her to a sanitarium and says: "Now, if she were only well, we should be the happiest couple in the world. As it is, when I come home from the store or office, and want a cheery, chatty time to rest me, I find my wife overworked, and worried about the servants and housekeeping, and she feels grieved that I don't sympathize with her or relieve her; and I don't know how to do *either*, though I am



---

ready to employ a doctor or hire more help when she desires it."

To show what are the "little foxes which spoil the vines" about the social hearth is the object of these letters. More than this, we want to quicken the conscience of our countrywomen on this health question. We want them to feel that a sin against the body is a sin in the sight of Heaven. An Indian once said that something about Jesus had gone into his ears, and he wanted to hear more, so that it would go down into his heart. Now, women can never be helped health-wise until it becomes a *heart* matter. Many of them already *know* better than they *do*.

Much good seed has the goddess Hygeia sown during the last fifty years among the common people, which has borne good fruit. Why have our women been so little benefited? Have they been stony-ground hearers; or has there been no depth of earth; or have gay birds or vain ones prevented the seed from taking root and bearing healthful fruit?

God has given us the body as a garment for the spirit, in which to do our work in this world, with the promise that, if we do it well, we shall have a new and more glorious one, when we go to one of the many mansions Jesus has promised to prepare for the "pure in heart."



## II.

### Lack of Muscular Development.

LADIES:—First among the causes of woman's weakness stands the lack of muscular development. And why is this? Because muscles, like mind, are developed by use, by activity. Women, with languid air and despondent tone, say, "We have no strength." And why have they none? Because they have not worked and acquired it. That is, they have not worked in the way which makes muscular tissue. American women, as a class, are not indolent, but very active, while much of their time is given to those pursuits which excite and exhaust the nervous system, but do not develop muscular power. Little as we think of our four hundred and fifty muscles, they really form the larger part of the human frame, save in those burdened with an excess of fat.

Now, if we permit these four hundred and fifty muscles to become weakened from want of appropriate exercise, we certainly cannot maintain a good physical balance. By these we breathe, walk, talk, work, and cannot even wink without their aid. Muscles are made up of bundles of fibers, each bundle being composed of smaller fibers, while each fiber consists of small filaments or threads, enclosed in a delicate sheath. These are supplied with artery, vein and nerve. But a better idea of the fine, firm filaments



---

which make up our muscular system can be gotten by examining boiled beef or the leg of a fowl than from any description that can be given. Perhaps our reverence for this part of our organization would be so increased that we would take better care to cultivate it, if we comprehended its delicacy and its power, its simplicity and complexity, so wonderfully combined. Not only the wisdom of the Great Father, but His tenderness toward us is seen in this, as in every other part of our frame.

As a sex we are inclined to value muscular power too little, and are more ready to cultivate any other quality than this. Feebleness should be regarded as a "feminine failing" rather than as a "fashionable accomplishment." Not that I would say that a wife should be a match for her husband in muscular power. It is an old proverb that "Comparisons are odious;" so to me are all measurements of moral, mental or physical strength between men and women. We may as well talk of the equality of hooks and eyes as the equality of the sexes. Each sex has its own gifts, and its need of help from the other.

Now, the trouble appears to be that our girls have been so busy growing good, agreeable and intelligent that they have neglected their bodies, the true foundation to make their graces a happiness to themselves and a charm to others.

A woman should not be a choice casket of charming accomplishments, too frail to even show them off to advant-



age, and thus give more anxiety than amusement, more care than comfort to those allied to her.

We should not foster the feebleness of our infancy; the pride of the father and affection of the mother love to meet all childhood's wants. Early love sees in its fair but frail one all needed perfection of body and of spirit. The petted bride is all the dearer for her helplessness. Manly strength, when warm with its first love, is on the alert to see that its idol is not fanned too roughly by the breezes of heaven. Nevertheless it is true that the husband of many years asks that his companion may have health, strength, self-possession, steadiness of nerve and cheerfulness of spirit.

If my consultation room told tales, it could give abundant confirmation of this. And not women only, but anxious husbands and fathers, ask what can be done to save the loved ones from an invalid's life or an early death. But the means I have to suggest are so simple that I fear you will turn away, not in a rage as Naaman did from Elisha when told to go and wash in Jordan seven times to cure him of his leprosy. If I could "bid you do some great thing," instead of several small things, such as common sense and the necessities of life commend, I should hope to cure you all at once.

First, remember that the *muscles* of growing girls should be strengthened by exercise, as well as their *minds*. Childish instinct prompts to this, and would complete the good work begun, were not little misses so early fettered



by fancy fixings. Between the necessary care not to harm the dress and the confinement induced by its style, there can be little healthful, happy sport, such as gives strength to the body and cheer to the spirit. The young of this generation, except the few who take gymnastic training, suffer more from lack of exercise than those in the past. Their mode of dress is more elaborate and allows less freedom of motion; then, too, in earlier times growing girls more than now helped their mothers in housework, which, within proper limits, is the best exercise ever given girlhood or womanhood. It not only develops the body, but cultivates energy, economy and self-reliance, which are indispensable to good health and true mental balance. Whoever works cheerfully at useful manual labor takes in knowledge at the very tips of the fingers—yes, good health and a good spirit at the same time.

Did not our Divine Teacher shed a sweet halo over the economies of life when He said to His disciples, “Gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost,” and that, too, when by His word He fed the five thousand with five loaves and a few small fishes? Should not this incident, so sublime, yet so simple, strengthen and cheer every woman in the exercise of domestic economy?

Did not the same Savior from sin and sorrow say, “Let him that would be greatest be servant of all?” More than this, He illustrated His teachings by washing the feet of His disciples, when their walk, in sandals, over a dry and dusty way, made it a need for cleanliness and



comfort. After the word and works of our Lord, shall we turn with contempt from any labor which meets any human need? I speak thus at length upon this point, not only because work is necessary for the right development of the body and brain, but to be done easily and healthfully it must be performed in the right spirit. A little story to illustrate:

A mother, having been absent from home at the dinner-hour, came into the dining-hall just as the tables were being cleared by busy hands. Among the working ones was her little dark-eyed daughter, in blue-checked pinafore, who hastened to gather up a suitable dinner for her mother, who was just then worn and weary with long watching by the bedside of a sick friend. After this, the little girl went on gathering spoons, piling plates, and picking up fragments as before. Soon she turned musingly to her mother and said, "I have been thinking of Ruth's sweet words to her mother: 'Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest I will die, and there will I be buried.'" As she finished this recital she added: "Mother, that is just the way I feel toward you, and I wish I could be of service to you, as Ruth was to her mother. But you are not in need, as Naomi was, and if you were, I should have no place to go and glean as she did." "But," said the mother, "you have just gleaned



---

me a good dinner from what was left by others. You are now gleaning bits of bread, potato and pudding, to be saved for the poor, who have no harvest-field to go gleaning in, like that of generous Boaz, and so come here for what we can save for them. Even the little work you may do is preparing you to be more useful to me in many ways by and by. Little girls learn many things from books; but much knowledge must be taken in through their small hands, if they ever get it. If they wish to grow to be as good as Ruth, useful as Ruth, they must, with ready feet and ready fingers, do whatever needs to be done for the comfort of those around them. They will not have to glean sheaves of wheat or barley, but they will find gleaning as needful and as noble in every household—gleaning which will save a mother many a weary step and many an anxious thought.”

This little incident suggests some sober thoughts in reference to the girls of our day. Some of them promise well, and some seem preparing for a useless, sickly, selfish life. Amid the sterile hills of New England girls must work and learn to *love* work. In many sections of our country the rich fields, with their ample harvests, make the family support so secure that even farmers' daughters are excused from all energetic work. As for the fair fingers in villages and large towns, they have less stimulus to wholesome industry, and more temptation to folly, so that the good sense of many a *good* mother cannot arrest the tide of vanity in her gay and growing girls



Young misses bewildered with beaux, brilliant silks, bright lights, and late hours, seem to feel often as if they could do without a mother, and the mother without them.

Where is the young miss who runs the giddy rounds of fashionable life who will say, with sweet submission to the maternal spirit, "All that thou sayest I will do," as did our ancient Ruth. Remember, Ruth lived in a rude age, was born and brought up in a heathen nation, but from her mother-in-law had learned to love the God of Israel. Many a daughter do we find, born in the best of families, baptized in the best of churches, taught in the best of schools, living under the light of that blessed gospel which teaches that those who would be either good or great must serve; and yet, when her indulgent mother asks her aid in some needful domestic duty, turns away with a frown and flaunt, saying, "I hate housework!" Truly, this ought not so to be. While we rejoice that girls now-a-days have both time and means for improving mind and manners beyond what their mothers possessed, still they should not be allowed to grow up mere birds of beauty, helpless and selfish. This will most surely be unless they are taught to work and made to work, and that, too, early—almost as early as our little friend who, when scouring knives at seven years of age, was praised by a neighbor for skill in business, to which she quietly replied, "I was brought up to work!" That little girl is now grown to be a young lady, and her beneficent sunshine thrown over a large household, of which she has



---

charge, makes every one feel that she was well brought up.

Now, do not dream that I think women should grow to be good housekeepers and nothing else. I only mean that not the overseeing but the doing of housework is the best of gymnastics, as a basis for physical, mental and moral strength.

“Woman’s sphere is home,” if she has one that gives her support and useful work; if not, it is anywhere she can find the two combined. It may be on the battle-field, in the hospital, or by the sick in her own city or town; it may be as artist, clerk or copyist, or as cook, seamstress or laundress in some other home than her own. Woman’s right to labor gives her the privilege of doing whatever needs to be done, provided she can do it well.

As the study of Latin is a good start for a good scholarship, so a good home-training in housework is the best preparation for success in any other occupation. Why, then, this dislike for domestic duty—this prejudice against labor? Whatever our Heavenly Father has made necessary to be done, there is dignity in doing, if we do it well. Who, then, should be ashamed to wash, bake or sweep when the cleanliness and comfort of this life which God has given us demand that it be well done and daily done?

A few years since, a lawyer came to our sanitarium after his daughter, who had been with us some months, and was greatly delighted to find her, in figure, complexion and cheer, so much improved. Before leaving, he asked me to tell him “what to do to keep her in so charming a



condition." I said, "Have her exercise." "Well," he enquired, "how? On horseback?" To which I replied, "Riding is good, walking is better, and working is best." Just then a shadow passed over his genial face, and with a sigh he said, "My wife dislikes domestic work, and so has never brought up our daughters to do it." Then he added, "I know you are right. But while my clients heed my counsel, my house is not under my control." In order that woman may be competent to give and receive husbandly counsel, to keep a home and care for children—if they have this threefold blessing—let her be early trained to work. And should her ship in life be a single craft, she can sail all the more successfully if she has had this discipline.

But as you are all weary by this time of hearing of housework as well as doing it, we will turn to other means for muscular development. All light gymnastics are well suited to the wants of women, whether weak or strong, sick or well. It is for girls what military drill is for boys in relation to health, strength and general bearing. These exercises are better than dancing to give ease, self-possession and a ready use of all the muscles. They develop the chest, strengthen the muscles that support the spine, improve the gait, and so do for the whole body what dancing does for heel and toe. Beside this, they improve the voice, strengthen the lungs, help digestion, prevent constipation, warm the extremities, give tone to the muscles about the hips, etc.



Dancing, according to the present mode, gives but moderate exercise, and may be called rather a pleasant diversion, an easy cultivation of the graceful, than a means of muscular development. If it could be taken at proper hours, and with good surroundings, it might have a place among social amusements. But as it is, we feel about dancing as Pollok said of theaters: "Many good and honest men maintain they might be turned to good account, and perhaps they might, but never are." So dancing might be a means of health; but between bad hours, bad dressing, bad eating and bad associates it has been of more harm than help to both body and spirit.

We are often asked about skating, and scarce know what to say. It gives both good air and good exercise, but it has many bad effects. Under its exhilaration our excitable girls, with little muscular tone, are apt to skate too long, and thus, when warm and weary, are liable to take cold from want of extra clothing or a warm place to rest. Then, aside from drowning, there are sundry serious accidents to which skaters are sometimes exposed. Since skating has come so much in vogue, we have seen several cases of injured spines and sprained joints which it will be hard to cure, and some skaters are disabled for life. Walking, as an exercise, is by no means to be disregarded. Fresh air, change of scene, erect position, free inspiration, make it invaluable. No work, no exercise or amusement can take its place. To get the full benefit of walking, one needs to be so clad as to give freedom to



both the upper and lower extremities. But the dress question we must leave for some future letter. Horseback riding is good, especially for those with weak lungs, lazy livers, poor digestions, etc. Recently we have heard it recommended for spinal disease, and have read of a wonderful cure thereby. But it would seem, in this case, that the muscles which support the spinal column were simply debilitated; hence the sitting erect and moderate exercise on horseback strengthened them.

We have known many seeming cases of spinal disease, which all manner of appliances, such as setons, blisters, cupping, scarification failed to cure while the patient kept close to bed, lounge or easy chair, that rapidly recovered under the discipline at a sanitarium without any of these helps—or rather hindrances.

For those who have become greatly enfeebled by disease, or from lack of exercise, the Swedish movements are an excellent aid. By this method the patient can have the circulation quickened and the muscles strengthened with little or no personal effort, the work being chiefly done by an attendant.

These varied aids are indeed valuable helps to meet the emergencies of invalidism, but can never alone develop genuine womanhood. Our preference for useful work as exercise is as strong as that of the toper for his favorite beverage, when he said, "Water will do occasionally, but for a steady drink give me whiskey."

Yours for the work, but not for the whiskey.



### III.

#### The Evils of Working Under Protest.

LADIES: Some of you who read my last letter are wondering why so many are worn out with housework, since it is a healthful employment. To be blessed in body or spirit by domestic duty, or any duty, it must be done cheerfully. Work performed under protest, like an oath taken with a mental reservation, lacks its true life force. If we would find the crown which lies beneath any cross, it must be shouldered and bravely carried, not shirked for half the time and dragged the other half.

Now, if the good Father had not known that labor was the best discipline for His sinning children, He would not have sent them forth from Eden to earn their bread by toil. Those parents who try to bring up their children in a garden without thorns or thistles, with everything at hand, so that there is no need of self-denying effort on their part, will find in them the worst of rank weeds and thorny shrubs, in the shape of sensuality, selfishness, sickness, morbid sentimentalism and a host of Satanic elements which would have been cast out or kept out by energetic and persevering industry. The increased educational advantages given our girls, together with strong foreign hands to perform domestic drudgery, as it is called, has left them



too much liberty to follow their own pleasure. Solomon says: "A child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame," and I am very sure they soon bring themselves to sickness, if to no worse sin. Many young misses come to us suffering from indigestion, headache, dimness of vision, and a host of other ills, simply because they have been allowed to read at will, at all times of day or night. I have now in mind many who have come near blindness before twenty, not from study, but from story reading, who, after many months of medical care and little use of their eyes for years, have even now to guard against gas light, snow-light or much reading. Others, from the same cause, are visited with strange nervous affections, such as twitching of the muscles of the face and other parts of the body, chorea or St. Vitus's dance, where the motions seem more Satanic than saint-like. Beside these, are a host of hysterical affections which doctors, out of respect to the sensibilities of patients, often designate as some anomalous nervous disease. The brain and nervous system play strange pranks with those who take insufficient bodily exercise. This is needed as a ballast. Part of the nervous force generated in the body should be exhausted or used by the muscular system. This one cause of many nervous affections suggests also one method of cure. The delicate nerves which run from the brain and spinal cord to every part of the body are so numerous and so minute that the finest needle will pierce one of them at whatever point it may touch. This complex network forms a nervous body which



---

seems to symbolize the spiritual one. Now, if we have overtasked this, our nerve body, giving it too little rest while our muscular system has had too little exercise, the first means to bring up the balance of power is to work the brain less and the body more.

Those who have been made sick by too intense mental or emotional life get well sooner by moderate manual labor than by any other means, that is, if they take an interest in it.

A case in point: A young wife of active mind and ready wit who had lost her babe, and lost her health and cheer, was a patient of ours. Her excitability, her times of deep depression, gave her friends great anxiety. Before me lies a letter just received from her, in which she says, "We are keeping house, and have no domestic; my health and cheer are excellent; have been too much occupied to get low spirited; have not had a single tantrum since my return; dishwater is splendid to wash out spells and the like."

She is one possessing much energy and dispatch, and so found diversion and comfort in housekeeping. Had she done it with reluctance and discontent, the magic power would have been lost.

When a quack was asked as to his system of practice, he replied, "It was to restore the distribution of the animal heat and the circulation, and thus sustain the equilibrium of all the forces of the body." Well, that is what seems to be wanted in many cases. The amount of



circulation in the muscles is too little, while the nerve centers are oppressed and engorged, rendering the subject irritable and over-sensitive. So, then, by medical treatment, or by manual labor, we should direct the life-force to the muscles, to the extremities, to the surface; thus restoring equilibrium and equanimity in mind and body. Hot foot baths with cool head baths are beneficial, or warm half baths in which the patient can sit erect, with limbs extended, with cold compresses to the head, are excellent; cool shallow baths, with friction, are also good, if the invalid have sufficient reactive powers; but best of all is to work out one's own physical salvation.

An excellent physician, a friend of ours, told an over-indulgent mother, to "have her invalid daughter take a hand bath after each meal, for one-half hour in the dishpan," every day for three months. An excellent prescription, generally poorly followed.

Of the many I have seen who have impaired their eyesight and induced a tendency of blood to the head by books, by painting or by fancy stitching, all have improved most rapidly, who, after some simple remedial means have turned not complainingly but cheerfully to hand labor.

The mind, occupied with productive industry, is in itself a curative agent, quite as much as bodily exercise. When an old painter was asked by a young artist what he mixed his paints with, he replied, "With brains, sir." This mixture not only makes good pictures, but it is an important ingredient in all the duties of life.



---

My husband says, "One cannot even make good bread unless brains are put into it."

And I am sure that every soul dwindles that does work into which no spirit is put. Energy infused into all the common duties of life gives strength and courage to meet and conquer the sterner realities that must at times be met and overcome.

We may seem to be mingling mind and matter, body and spirit, and so we are, for we cannot avoid it, since in this world the twain are one, and hence help or hinder each other.

Every nerve should be an inlet of strength, intelligence and pleasure, instead of restiveness and discontent. A lady who came to me for consultation, began by saying "that she was troubled with her nerves." Well, thought I, if it was a tooth, we could take it out; if a tumor, it might be removed; but if your nerves trouble you, you are in a dilemma. Just then the entire nervous system, interpenetrating the whole body, came before me as a picture. To take out the troublesome nerves was impossible; to employ any emolient which would soothe them all was also impossible. It is by far better to maintain intact the nerve forces so that they will not trouble their owners; for nerves exhausted, petted and indulged are very clamorous, like children who have come up unrestrained. All forms of nervous disease are on the increase, from fidgets to cramps; from *ticdoloreux* to *sciatica*; from partial to entire paralysis.



Surely we must conclude that there is something wrong in the habits of this generation. Or else why this super-sensitiveness of the nervous system?

Our children live on food too stimulating. Tea and coffee, whatever may be said of them for the aged, when taken early in life excite and exhaust prematurely. Our growing children get too little sleep. When our girls should be maturing in nerve and muscle, between school-life and social life they are over-stimulated, and so come on to the womanly stage with a delicate and sensitive organization.

Eyes which should rejoice in light are pained thereby; sounds which should be enjoyed or endured, become sources of discomfort or of actual suffering. So all the inlets of pleasure—the five senses—are likely to become so over-sensitive as to bring pains. Besides the multitude of neuralgic diseases, more severe than any other bodily agony, there are a host of ideal infirmities which are worse to cure than the real ones.

Little aches, well nursed, soon grow to be big pains. Of some nervous invalids we can truly say:

“Their griefs are great,  
Because they are so small;  
And would be greater,  
Were they none at all.”

There is nothing which expands so much by thought as our own infirmities. Talking about them helps them to grow wonderfully. Added to these, affectionate attention



---

and constant solicitude on the part of an attendant or friends, and we have a sure recipe for making a confirmed chronic invalid.

Such are like a client who wept in court while on trial, and when asked why he was so overcome, replied that he did not know he had been so misused till he heard his lawyer plead his case! Some invalids have so many able advocates of their case about them that they have continually a realizing sense of all they suffer, and some that they do not. Unwelcome and uncherished aches and pains, like neglected guests, often take their leave.

Not long since, a lady told me that she still suffered from the effects of a fever she had after going to Vermont, and that the journey there caused this fit of sickness. As she dwelt at length upon the case, I began to grow curious as to what there was about that journey which could have made her sick. The mountains to which she went on those glorious autumn days were surely healthful resorts. And she had no children to care for, and had for an escort a husband who had been for years a railroad conductor, he must be able, when off duty, to look after his wife and their baggage. So at last I said, "What was there in that journey that could have made you sick?" "Why," she replied, "you remember that I took my dog with me, and the care of him was too much for my nervous system. You know he would run around at the stations, and I was afraid I should lose him; and so had to look after him so closely that I got overdone."



Now, a woman who gets sick by any sensible work, I feel quite sure can be cured. But this, to me, was a hopeless case. Poor woman! Poor dog!



## IV.

### Evils of the Multiplicity of Domestic Cares. Argument for Simplicity of Life.

LADIES: There is a noble band of housekeepers of which no mention has been made in these letters—those who give their life energies to their work, cheerfully, just so long as they have the ability to endure it; those martyrs who never complain of much serving, so long as they can carry the cares which come from our modern style of living. I have seen many such, prematurely worn threadbare in body and spirit. An asylum for the insane has a long list of inmates brought thither by household cares. Surely there should be some way by which a family, not pinched by poverty can eat, drink, dress and sleep without shattering the mind or body of its maternal head. The introduction of foreign help and modern improvements into our dwellings seems to have multiplied and complicated domestic duties, so that women are more worn and worried than when they did their own work, and spun, wove, made and mended for the whole family. I note that those who keep up a genteel residence, with maids for every department, from laundry to nursery, are always worn out with care. Those who try to maintain a similar style with less help are overtasked, physically and men-



tally. Somewhere between the palace and the shanty there must be a golden mean, where wives and mothers can live without being broken down by domestic work. In quiet country homes, where women do their own work, I observe less complaint about being overdone; less nervous solicitude about household affairs; more good food, with much less of waste, than anywhere else. By this I do not mean that every wife to be *well* should live without hired help. Every woman should do the duty that lies nearest to her. It may be to lengthen her husband's slender income by the simplest of means; it may be by giving homes to those who only can have one by going out to service. But whichever way, let her manner of life be such that she can sustain it, and also maintain good cheer, which, in a mother, gives a genuine charm to a home, however humble. Our present modes of living call for too much cash from the husband and too much care from the wife. Every home needs the presence and influence of the father as well as the mother. This can never be had if he has to give body and soul to money making, in order to maintain that home. When the head of the house is held by business, so as to seldom have an hour's leisure beyond those for eating and sleeping, the wife droops for want of that companionship which drew her from her parental home to his. Besides this, children need, during their impressible years, both the masculine and the feminine influence to secure their most perfect development. Without the co-operation of the father in family discipline and gen-



---

eral guidance, the burden rests too heavily on the mother. That wives may not be overtaxed, let them learn to live more simply; and that husbands may have the needed leisure for home duties, let them also learn to live with less money.

As the first step toward diminishing family expenses and domestic duties, let us have a *small house*. Very many have told me they "were broken down by the care of large houses." In many private residences comfort and convenience are sacrificed to custom and fashion. The kitchen has been too small; the parlor too large. The one scantily furnished; the other elegantly. Rosewood and damask in the one, while the other is scant of tin basins and small ware for convenient cookery. So throughout the house is plenty of elegant furniture, purchased at great cost, requiring much care, and there is also great want of convenient arrangements which serve to lighten labor.

Henry Ward Beecher once defined a parlor as a place where all the grand furniture had moved in and all the comfort gone out. These shut up places, used only for calls and company, seem to have a confined air, in which no one feels at home, not even the lady of the house. The *best room* is the one in which the whole family find the most comfort. Here is an atmosphere of cheery chat, which can be kept up more readily when friends from without come in than anywhere else.

Let me give you a sketch of a family sitting-room with



which I am familiar. It is a room fifteen feet in width by thirty in length, with a coal grate at one end and a small wood-stove at the other; so that all the emergencies of our changeable climate can be met, in the way of a quick fire for an hour, or a steady one for the twenty-four, or both. The room is divided midway, and the ground-glass in the doors makes a charming twilight in one for conversation, while the lamp for reading is in the other. Each side of the chimney there is a cushioned box which serves as a seat, having wood in one, the family slippers in the other.

Here boots and gaiters are exchanged for evening comfort. A small cupboard in the side of the chimney contains tools for all manner of repairs. There is a closet for children's toys, and another for coats and cloaks, a case for books, with shelves below for magazines; on the wall, amid the pictures, is a fancy case for letters and another for newspapers. Under the glass may be found a stand with a series of drawers—a deep one for family mittens and gloves, the smaller ones for each member to occupy with such articles as may be desired. In the back room a piano, secretary, a closed washstand with its many conveniences, a large cupboard in the hall for hats and shawls, with deep drawers below for the articles to be made or mended; also for all bits and ends needed for repairs. Within this room all the varied emergencies incident to an industrious circle can be met without a flight to some remote corner to wash a soiled finger, brush a stray lock,



---

find a hook or a button, a spool of thread or a piece of cloth to meet any want. Here gather all the household, from the grandfather of more than fourscore years with white locks, to the youngest brown-haired boy. The tired ones rest on a lounge or in easy chairs, while some one reads. Others mend or make, and the boy in the corner oils his boots or repairs his skates. During study hours the doors are closed; one goes to the piano, another to pen and paper at the secretary, a third to books; and so the family circle is not scattered, but the elder are still at hand to steady and instruct the younger, and to receive life and cheer in return.

There is no chapel scene so charming as the family gathering around the open fire; where the youngest may ask a question for the better understanding of the Bible reading before evening prayers. With Cuyler, we believe not only in the "moral and spiritual influence," but in the mental and physical benefit of an *open fire*. Around this all gather to warm their feet, cool their heads and settle their suppers by a hearty laugh over a few nice stories, and so are ready for a good sleep in a cold room.

But some one says this is more like a New England kitchen than a private parlor. We grant it, and that is why we like it, for those old-fashioned large rooms witness more work easily done, more things cheaply learned, combined with more good cheer, than any other apartments I have ever seen.

Good housekeeping seems to me to consist in making



the most people comfortable with the least work. To this end never pen people up in private parlors to be entertained, and thus make the wife anxious lest her guests should lack due attention, but give them the freedom of the family room, where each can do a part toward making the visitors happy. No woman can so dispatch business, so multiply her gifts and graces, or entertain company with ceremony, look after children properly, direct domestics, and not work and worry so as to wear herself out before her time. How can she look well to the ways of her household, even during winter evenings, when the family are scattered in the four corners of a large house? The older daughters may be in the parlor receiving calls from gentlemen with whom the mother has not the pleasure, or perchance the pain, of an acquaintance. The younger, who have not yet emerged from school into society, are in their private rooms reading stories, when they should be studying history, the little ones in the nursery, in charge of a servant, with whom even the family silver would not be intrusted, and the sons are—where? Rumor answers, “anywhere but where they should be.”

The Israelites did make brick without straw, difficult as it seemed; but how any mother can train her children without being with them is more mysterious still. Froebel's motto was: “Let us *with* our children live.” To do this, the mother must be where she can see what they are doing, without going to look after them. She must hear what they are saying, without listening. Children



---

are often poisoned in the nursery, by that which is more difficult to eradicate than even drugs.

Now what can we say to quiet those housekeepers who are more nice than wise? Those who wage such unceasing war against dirt and disorder, neither love nor money can give them rest? Not even the best hired help can bring relief, for none are nice enough to meet their needs. Such must die before their time, for they are like the Scotchman who, on falling into the water, exclaimed, "I will be drowned, nobody shall help me!" Nerves and muscles are ever on the stretch lest a fly leave a speck on the window-pane, or a spider festoon ever so finely some obscure corner.

A friend of mine was asked if she did not think Lucretia Mott the neatest housekeeper she ever saw. "No," she replied, "not the *neatest* but the *best*." When I spent a day with this queenly Quaker woman, I, too, thought her among the best, in that she was at ease, and made her family and friends feel so, too. There she sat in the corner by the open fire, in her pleasant parlor, with her mending-basket by her side. So she stitched while she talked of the country and its political prospects, looked after her little grand daughter, who played beside her, reminded Isaac that it was time for him to take his bitters before dinner, and chatted with us all in a way that made us feel a family freedom—not at all like a stiff parlor visit.

Now, I like the distinction of my friend between the *neatest* and the *best* housekeeper. Some are so neat as to



be always uncomfortably anxious, and make those who would help them so, too; for they fear they will fall short of their standard of neatness and order. With such, "Cleanliness is not only akin to Godliness," but more important. Such are the Marthas, who are so cumbered with cares that not even the Marys who have chosen the good part can understand and appreciate their responsibilities sufficiently to afford timely relief. The eternal vigilance which is the price of freedom is what these pattern housekeepers pay for their position.

When the Disciples came back, after their first mission abroad, our dear Lord said to them: "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile." This sweet recognition by our Divine Teacher of our human needs should be a comfort to every earnest worker. For all such, along the way of life are little by-paths and nooks for rest, which should be to us what the desert place was to Christ's Disciples. But too often we are blinded by pride, hurried by an imperious will, and so rush on past these resting-places, not seeing them, not believing that they exist for us. To all who are in the "narrow" way, the good Father either gives the strength to work or opens a way for rest. It matters little which. He plans for us, if we accept it aright. Let wives and mothers live so simply and listen so reverently to the still, small voice, that from day to day they may know whether rest or work is their first duty.



## V.

### The Culinary Department—Curtailing its Labors; Simplicity in Food; Evils of Tea.

LADIES: We will next consider the culinary department, to see if there are any means of curtailing our labors there, or of accomplishing them more easily. As the first means to this end let every young lady serve an apprenticeship in the kitchen before she assumes the responsibility of overseeing one. Many a girl who stood "first head scholar" at the academy or seminary, and afterward graduated with honor at the best college for young ladies, has no knowledge of household science, even when her mother is a pattern housekeeper. Parents, in their zeal to educate their daughters, keep them so constantly in school that they have neither time nor strength to learn domestic duties. One may as well try to teach mathematics before they can solve the problems perfectly and promptly as to expect to keep house successfully before they know by practical experience how to dispatch correctly its duties. No matter how able they may be to supply themselves with servants, they will be "bothered" with the ignorant or duped by the designing unless they are in *reality*, as well as in name, "mistresses of the house." One says: "I mean to have a housekeeper, so as not to be troubled with domestics and their duties." But



where will you find one? I know a host of women who *want* just such a barrier between them and household cares; *very* few ever find them. Now, much as we rejoice in the growing facilities for mental cultivation among women, we find that no amount of classics, mathematics, music and painting can make up for the lack of good health, good sense, and the good business ability necessary to make housekeeping go on with comfort and economy. Many a young wife breaks in health, breaks in spirit, here. She is vexed and worn with duties the details of which she is not familiar, and so when things go wrong she does not know how to right them. She cannot guide others in work with which she is not herself acquainted.

Many a young wife is worn out with the care of housekeeping before the birth of her first baby. Many a bride prefers boarding because she feels inadequate to the care of a house. And so the best time for two impressible young hearts to assimilate and adjust themselves to each other in their own quiet home is lost in the general dissipation of hotel life, where new and fascinating acquaintances are formed, and so husband and wife grow unconsciously less and less to each other, instead of more and indispensable. "Young married folks," having the right spirit, are much happier paring apples out of the same pan in their own kitchen corner of an evening, than playing cards and sipping wine in the finest public parlors.

Many women not educated in domestic economy make



---

most excellent housekeepers, if they go about it with energy and cheer, and have in the husband a "helpmeet." One of the most successful women as a wife and mother that I know of, tells me that her husband gave her the most instruction she had in housekeeping; that when she began she knew nothing; but that he, though a physician, was brought up on a farm, and hence knew about home duties, and being some years older, was to her husband, doctor and mother, till she got established; so their home life, with their many children, has been a very happy one. "But," she said, "I remember too well my own embarrassments to let one of my daughters grow up ignorant of domestic work." This husband is a man of courage, cheer and self-possession, and he could take his feeble young wife, and care for her health, and help her into household duties; and so she has made him not only a sweet and sunny wife for twenty-five years, but a very useful one, though so delicate at the time of her marriage that the old family physician said she "must soon die." For all his thoughtful care during the first years of their wedded life she has more than repaid him, not only in her loving devotion, but in her success as a mother, in bringing up so well a goodly number of sons and daughters, and also as a business woman in her care of home finances, leaving him at liberty to devote himself to his profession, in which he has grown eminent.

Now, there is here and there a husband who can steady and strengthen his wife through the embarrassments in-



cident to getting started in housekeeping, when she lacks both health and intelligence for the work; but I fear they are rare. Often both parties get discouraged and estranged in their first effort to make a home together. The wife becomes nervous and hysterical; the husband at first sympathizes, and thinks his dear Demara is too delicate, too ethereal, for domestic work; but by-and-by, when he can't get any one to cook and bake bread satisfactorily, and his means are unequal to the home demands, he begins to feel that his wife ought to see to things as his mother did.

The poor child says: "My husband don't sympathize as he used to, and—and—and"—well, we know more of these home troubles than it would be wise to tell. Having stood as *mother* "confessor" for invalid wives and troubled husbands for many a year, we feel that poor health and poor housekeeping has had much to do with the flood of calls for divorce on the ground of "incompatibility of temper."

Of course, a blunder now and then at the beginning causes a good laugh, and where there is good business ability one will soon be able to adapt one's self to a new girl, or no girl, as the case may be. A husband once said that he lived on dough until his wife learned to bake, as he could not afford to hire a girl, and that she finally became an excellent cook. Another told me that his young bride, hearing him say that he was very fond of pie-plant pie, thought that she would give him a pleasant surprise



by making him one for dinner. It proved indeed a surprise, for he found between the two crusts only a pie-plant leaf! He, too, gave me the pleasant assurance that his wife had come to be an adept in culinary art.

If housekeepers commence first in a small way these deficiencies in early training can be better overcome; but when they begin on a large scale they seldom get a good start, and so are never adequate to their position. One of the great embarrassments to young housekeepers—and a weariness to those of experience, even—is our complex cookery and the great variety at each meal. Many articles waste the strength in the making and also in the digesting. Pickling, preserving, and all manner of “fancy fixings” for the table are a great tax upon the wife, first in the preparing, and next in the nursing of those who eat them. Make all table arrangements simple and healthful every day, and if friends come, set before them the same, and thus do away with all weariness of “cooking for company.”

I was reading in Emerson the other day, his chapter on “The Domestic Life,” when I came across a paragraph which ought to be inscribed on every woman’s banner. It reads: “I pray you, O excellent wife, not to cumber yourself and me to get a rich dinner for this man or this woman who has alighted at our gate, nor a bed-chamber made ready at too great a cost. These things, if they are curious in, they can get for a dollar at any village. But let this visitor, if he will, in our looks, in our accent and



behavior, read our hearts and earnestness, our thoughts and will, which he cannot buy at any price in any village or city, and which he may well travel fifty miles and dine sparsely and sleep hard in order to behold. Certainly let the board be spread and let the bed be dressed for the friend, but let not the emphasis of hospitality lie in these things. Honor to the house where they are simple to the verge of hardship, so that there the intellect is awake and reads the laws of the universe, the soul worships truth, and love and honor and courtesy flow into all deeds."

The quotation reminds me of a day spent some years ago in a beautiful family, where this doctrine prevailed. A number of persons had been invited, and if the good wife had done as too many of us do, she would—for she was short of help—have spent a large portion of the day in getting a dinner. Instead of this, however, she, with her husband, gave almost the entire afternoon to their guests. It was a delightful social and intellectual treat.

Just before the dinner hour both husband and wife withdrew, and in a very few moments the table was spread with plain, simple, wholesome food, to which all sat down and enjoyed with a relish I have rarely seen. All learned a lesson, and passed a much happier day than if the good wife had spent her time in preparing rich dishes for them.

Children who grow up on plain food rarely relish compounds and condiments. Those who have held their appetites in subjection to their intelligence usually enjoy



---

simple food better than any other, after a little self denial in starting. Bad dietetic habits often spoil the appetite as well as digestion. Any pleasure indulged in to excess ends in privation and pain. Now, the good Father not only made it necessary for us to eat, but has so made us that we may take comfort in eating, and also in digesting what we eat. But when we think more of the momentary pleasure of the palate than of permanent results, then we "sell our birthright to health and happiness." Artificial appetites induced by over-stimulating food are very unreliable. Now and then something will relish, but the real, regular pleasure of eating is lost. "Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness." Grace before meals, grumbling after, is inconsistent in a Christian household. Indigestion is quite sure to make an unreasonable character, whether at the dinner-table or elsewhere. Truly, there should be some way of living by which an intelligent family can have other graces than that said at the beginning. Let the lady of the house come to the table looking weary with overwork in preparing the meal, and feeling worried for fear it will not please; then some complain because food does not relish, and others express fears that it will not digest, and nothing short of destitution makes a more desolate domestic picture. Our friends will not suppose that we advocate the hunger cure, or any rigid dietetic system. All these means are good when applied to the right patient, but very bad when adopted by the wrong one. Hence, any one needing such remedial means should



be under the eye of some judicious adviser. But these letters are only to be suggestive as to general habits, and not to meet specific cases.

To those in health bountiful Mother Earth has given an extensive "bill of fare," which is good to be eaten with thanksgiving. No table should be a temptation calling for self-denial or leading to misery; but a time for many comforts, eating with relish, chatting with cheer, and now and then a good joke and jolly laugh. Let all troublesome topics be avoided at meals. Do not dwell on the difficulties of business, the delinquencies of domestics, or discipline the children at the dinner-table, for a cheerful spirit not only gives relish for food, but a good start at digesting the same.

Much of the nervous unrest and over-anxiety of this generation is due to the excessive use of tea. "Our grandmothers" drank it and worked it off through the muscular system; but those of this age, with brain and nerves more sensitive, and engaged in pursuits which intensify this condition, are rendered more excitable by stimulants which, under other circumstances, might be used with less harm. Women who do much manual labor, drink their tea, do their work and sleep well; not so with those who are very nervous and wakeful, whose employments are sedentary or such as induce more mental than muscular activity. I have known many of the latter class who lived largely on their tea, eating little food and growing thin, sensitive and sleepless, sharp in face, sharp in feel-



---

ing and often too sharp in words to be agreeable to those with whom they live.

Some years ago a lady was brought to us who had been confined to her bed, chiefly, for several months with what the doctor called a "slow nervous fever." When she came I found the "nervous fever" indicated by the small, sharp pulse, dry skin and restless eyes; but the precise cause was a mystery, no organ being diseased sufficiently to induce this febrile excitement. My curiosity and surprise were still further increased to find that under our regimen it vanished entirely in a few days. On further inquiry as to all her habits, I learned she had eaten little or no food, and taken tea five or six times a day, as she felt its need. When this was removed she ate well, slept well, and from week to week grew plump and cheery as a child. When she had got quite well she went out to tea in town, drank it, and had her usual restless night; and from that time to this the same beverage brings the same result.

Every year I am more and more surprised to see the number of women and children who are suffering from loss of appetite, loss of sleep, and that peculiar irritability which comes from the two combined, and yet have no idea of the cause, for they say: "I never dreamed black tea hurt any one." Now, this same black tea may be excellent to help one through an emergency, when rest is needed and cannot be had, just as you would put spurs to a horse to win a battle or meet a railway train; but to ride at this rate long would be ruinous to horse and man. Just so



our women, spurred on by this stimulant, rush when they should rest. Tea may be one of the good things if used to steady and strengthen the nervous system when depressed by accident, severe sickness or overwork, but those who live on it live too fast, and, when they have once come to rely upon it, feel weak and worthless without it, and with it grow more and more nervous still, wondering why, because they fancy their "breakfast tea" is harmless as new milk. Black tea is less stimulating than green, consequently less injurious; but even this will not do for "victuals, drink and lodging," as the Irishman said of his whiskey. As to coffee, all know it is injurious in many ways, save those who,

" . . . convinced against their will,  
Are of the same opinion still."

So much has been said about diet, but it is not intelligence as to what is best for us so much as a conscience and courage that is wanted on the part of women to hold their tables subject to the laws of health. They do not want their supplies to seem scant, or to appear unskilled in the various mysteries of the culinary art. I have just received a letter from one of the readers of *THE HERALD OF HEALTH*,\* who appears to think I am laying the responsibility of healthful home habits too heavily on womanhood, and she writes thus: "Belabor well the fathers,

---

\* NOW *THE JOURNAL OF HYGIENE AND HERALD OF HEALTH*, edited and published by Dr M. L. Holbrook, New York City.



husbands and brothers, as well as their female counterparts, for here, I opine, lies half the mischief." Well, may be so. Every woman speaks from her own point of observation. For our part, the fathers, husbands and brothers to whom we have been most nearly allied have been more ready for all manner of reforms in diet, dress and household arrangements than we have—in short, always ready to plan so as to make it easy for the "women folks."

From the number of men deep in disastrous speculations, who are trying to keep strength up with brandy, and nerves quiet with tobacco, and of those whose faces show they are living for sensual pleasures only, either in high life or low, we have no doubt but that many women find around the social hearth and domestic board some very unreasonable male members. Beside these sinners there are doubtless men, as well as women, who lack moral courage to sustain the sisterhood in any custom contrary to that which society usually sanctions. There are men, too, who seem to have a chronic habit of complaining of women. They are like the crusty old deacon we knew in Vermont, who said: "Women, from Bible times till now, are always a plague when one is in trouble." "Now," said he, "there was poor old Job, settin' down in the corner all covered with biles, and what did his wife do but open the door, stick her head in, with her dish-cloth in her hand, and say, 'Job, cuss God and die?'"



For all women whose lives are shaded and labors hindered by any of the above class we have a heart full of unspoken sympathy; but we do not think we can help such by "belaboring" the men in these articles. It would be like preaching to people who are not present, for who expects any gentlemen to read these "Letters to Ladies." But seriously, we have great faith that every wife, mother and daughter can do much toward ordering "well the ways of her own household," if she goes to work with a wise head, a warm heart, and in a womanly way. Men have an innate kindly consideration toward genuine womanhood, when it is not drowned by drunkenness or debauchery, and even then it often shines out beautifully, like the lucid moments in a wild delirium.

Every woman who so lives as to inspire confidence in her good spirit, good judgment and good business ability, gives daily a living epistle "known and read of all men" about her, which will have tenfold more influence than anything I can write. "Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband, also, and he praiseth her." I have indulged in this addendum as an answer to other ladies who may be feeling like the correspondent before mentioned.



## VI.

### Let Us Take Needful Rest.

LADIES: When Mahomet's soldiers complained that the weather was hot, the march wearisome, and they wanted rest by the way, the iron man replied: "Rest! rest! rest! Shall we not have all eternity to rest in?"

The Divine Leader in Palestine, unlike the one in Arabia, was mindful of all human needs, and said to His followers: "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest awhile." If we listen, I think we shall hear Him now, speaking to us just as He did to the Disciples, when they returned for fresh instructions after their first tour of preaching and healing. Humanity wearies and wears in any work, however worthy, however cheering our success. Even Elisha needed time and place for rest, and the same good Providence which commanded the ravens to feed his predecessor prompted the "great woman" (or, as the old translators render it, a "rich woman,") to prepare a little chamber on the wall, with its bed, table, stool and candlestick, so that when on his way to Shunem he would turn in thither and rest. The prophet seems to have had a standing welcome to the hospitalities of the house, for we read that as often as he passed by "he turned in to



eat bread;" but beside refreshment he needed a resting place.

How often have I seen those who seemed to need Elisha's chamber on the wall more than a home with "modern improvements," more than medical skill to make them well. A quiet corner like his, a cheerful walk for charitable purposes, a place to "turn in and eat bread," would suffice to cure many a chronic case, *if* with these came the contented spirit.

But in this "fast age," so full of business and bustle, few take time for rest or retrospect. Some are in great haste to do a little good on a large scale, or perhaps great good on a small scale. Others are in a hurry because those around them are, and so apoplexy, paralysis, and more obscure diseases of the brain and nervous system, are selecting their victims from among these hurried people. Many within the circle of our acquaintance are receiving slight warnings of the approach of a final failure of health, in the way of numbness of the limbs, disagreeable sensations in the top of the head, throbbing and ringing in the ears, dark spots before the eyes, dimness of vision, sleeplessness, etc. Those who take warning at these monitions, and "turn aside into a desert and rest awhile," and thereafter, when they return again to the busy world, work more prudently, may last to labor for many years. But few listen to these warnings, for along with them comes a restless haste, a nervous solicitude, which impels them onward faster than ever before.



---

The following is an illustration of the type we once met in the "Great West," where people and places grow fast, and do not always know when to stop growing: An individual began his business life with only twenty-five dollars and became a millionaire. When surrounded with all the elegancies of life and blessed with children and children's children, the same imperative business haste hurried him on, so that he had no time to enjoy the good things he had gathered around him, or rather, he had no relish for anything but work. So he hurried on until exhausted in body and brain, and then he would sit quietly in a corner by the open grate, seldom speaking, and then only in a low tone, eating very little, and sleeping much of the time. In this state he would remain for three or four weeks, and then suddenly, as he would say, he "felt the electrical fire return to him again," and he would be up and off at three o'clock in the morning, driving his business as hard as ever—riding fast, talking loudly, and sleeping but little—till again worn out, when this state of quietness would return and effect a recuperation, and he would be off to business once more. One day a friend said to him: "Mr. ———, why do you not now rest and enjoy your riches?" "Rest! rest!" said he, "I hate rest, and wish I did not have to take time to eat and sleep!" "Why," responded his friend, "don't you expect to rest in Heaven?" "No," he replied, "if that were a place of rest I should not want to go there! To me the great beauty of that country is, that there we work all the time without eating or sleep-



ing." This imperative business haste was the result of an overwrought brain which ended in insanity and death. There are many morbid symptoms which are often supposed to call for active measures, when it is passive ones the patient needs.

A clerical friend had been subject to severe attacks of what was then thought to be bilious colic, and had been treated with the usual active remedies for that disease, to the great injury of his sensitive organization. These attacks have since proved to be of a purely neuralgic character, induced by nervous exhaustion, coming on after close mental labor, as when he had written a sermon which called forth much thought or deep emotion. After leaving all close study and giving himself to light labor the attacks ceased entirely.

A lady of my acquaintance, whose position requires much anxious thought and responsible care, was subject to severe and sudden attacks of pain in the stomach and through it to the back opposite. For hours a groaning agony would rest upon her. Her suffering she described as more intense than any thing she had ever experienced. For a time they were supposed to arise from indigestion, and more and more care as to diet was exercised, and less and less food was taken, but still the attacks grew more frequent and more severe. Becoming certain they were not induced by undigested food, other habits of life were watched, and the discovery was soon made that they came on after any close and continued mental activity, especially



---

when from anxious care her usual meals had been omitted, and that the less she ate the more frequent and severe the attacks. Her usual responsibilities were then resigned, a journey taken which restored her appetite, so that she ate freely, slept abundantly, and exercised a great deal in the open air, and had no relapse. On her return to her home labors, she found that whenever her brain work was so increased that her appetite diminished, the symptoms of the dreaded guest would reappear. These warnings have been promptly heeded, and more bodily exercise, more brain rest and more food have prevented their return for years.

In this case the nervous force seems to have been so expended that there was a temporary failure in the ganglionic system of nerves distributed to the stomach, and hence this indescribable agony in that region.

Strong emotions—such as joy, grief, fear, solicitude—exhaust the nervous system more rapidly than intellectual activity, and hence rest is needed to repair that waste. But, says one: “I feel the need of rest, but I can’t find time to take it.” Well, that is the difficulty we had in mind when we urged greater simplicity in diet, dress, and in the home life, that there might be leisure to “go up into the mountain,” down by the river side, or into the spare chamber of a friend, or some cozy corner at home, and take the so much needed rest. If we order the general tenor of our lives with Christian simplicity and economy, I think we shall also find the spare hours needed to keep us in health and cheer.



Our Savior says: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Now, don't spiritualize this until you have spirited away all its meaning, all its comfort. Fashion and the Pharisee are not unlike, in that they bind upon us heavy burdens grievous to be borne, such as bring great care and little comfort. Have you, Christian wife and mother, found "your yoke easy and your burden light?" If not, canvass the domain of your duties; see how much you can curtail your crushing cares and still be a Christian. Perchance this pruning would make you a more consistent one. We who believe a good Father orders all our ways in mercy should not be in a state of chronic weariness, or, as the Yankees say, in "a constant stew." To be sure, there will be times when labors and cares will tumble in apace; but if we possess our souls in patience, and work with cheerful energy, they will disappear, and just so sure as a calm comes after a storm, so sure shall we find time for more rest than usual. When over-weary we are ready to sing with one of old:

"Lord, what a feeble piece  
Is this our mortal frame!"

And still we find it has great elasticity, great power of endurance in emergencies; and if we watch and take the little rests which circumstances offer, at the time or soon after, we shall come out not only unharmed, but with renewed reverence for the great wisdom shown in human mechanism.



---

David said the wicked were like a troubled sea, which would not rest, and we have seen many modern saints who seemed in a similar condition constantly. The burden of their song for this life is, "I am over-done;" for the other,

"There is rest for the weary,  
There is rest for you,  
On the other side of Jordan."

Now, not only the Jesus of the new dispensation, but the Jehovah of old, recognized our need of rest, and set in order day and night—the one for labor, the other inviting to rest and repose. Beside this, the Lord established the rest-day, for we read that "on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed." Now we invent all manner of devices to shorten our nights: and if we do not "break the Sabbath" we "crack it," as the little boy said, and curtail it, too. But still, despite all the waves of worldliness which wash against this beneficent institution, it still stands as a firm rock, and casts for us a peaceful shadow, beneath which we may rest once a week. I speak rather of the physical blessings which this one rest-day brings, though body and spirit are so allied that if we blight one we mar the other. Whatever our daily duties, the more truly we turn head, heart and hand aside from them on this one day the better prepared are we for the labors, the pleasures or the perplexities of the next six. The great Father, like a loving mother, has planned rest for us from the foundation of the world, but we, like restless children,



rebel against accepting it. I note often, and with regret, that many excellent women, worn out by over-work and excessive care, feel, when laid up for rest, that they are then of little or no use. Now, this is often the time to do their crowning work—to give lessons of patient, trustful endurance, such as they could not illustrate in any other condition. The world needs a good spirit more than good works, even. A clergyman, receiving an expression of sympathy from a friend because of the burdens which came upon him on account of his invalid wife, replied: “I have the best wife in the world for me. She helps me just where I most need help, for I lacked faith in the personal power of the Gospel to sustain one under bodily pain and daily privation. She has so perfectly illustrated this point that I preach it in faith.” Of course, we do not expect all husbands to be as appreciative of the gentler influences as the one above mentioned. Here and there we find a sample like the one in Vermont, who, when he had a sick wife for whom his neighbor made kind inquiry, replied: “Wall, yes, she’s some better, but she won’t be any profit to me this summer.” We remember another who, on hearing the poor pay which women received for their work, said: “Why, I think they get all they airn now; the work my wife duz isn’t wuth a dollar a week to me!” This same wife was the mother of half a dozen children, and some of those were sons. But there is no use in talking about this class of miserly men and miserable women, for they are quite beyond any missionary help.



---

But to return to our point. Every husband has his peculiar needs of a help-meet. Every home has its motherly work for head, heart and hand. But nature here, as everywhere, has her compensation, and if one faculty fails, the others are often more signally useful. Therefore, if we do the best we can to be strong in body, then the good spirit will so make up deficiencies that life will never be a failure. Many mothers make good housekeepers of their daughters when their own infirmities have laid them aside from their regular duties, and if they then rest in spirit as well as in body, they infuse an element of peace into the home circle. But if unrest and discontent possess them because they cannot work as they once did, their power to do good is destroyed.

But having found the time for rest, when or how shall she get it—at a watering place? In that wilderness of feminine finery, where any one who does not contribute her share to the show feels like an odd stick? Little chance for real rest, and that bought at a very dear rate, is found in such places. Of course, if it is a change of scene, mineral waters, sea bathing, a peep at the great or gay world that is wanted, we find it there. But if it is rest that is needed, it can be gotten in larger quantities and at cheaper rates in other ways. If you live in the city and want country air for your children, don't take them where the country is filled with city airs, but to some quiet place; turn them out to pasture in plain dress, and let them frolic with the lambs and colts and grow strong. This for a sea-



son; but now for the little rests which we need, not once a year, but once a week. Look for these out of doors and in the country much as possible. A tired head and a feeble body get but little rest or renovation shut up in close carriages, jolting about amid all the sights, sounds and smells of a crowded town. But take a quiet drive in an open carriage, with children along, to divert by the things they see and enjoy, and it lifts one quite out of human details. Better still is a tramp with these little ones, having a lunch, so that one meal may be enjoyed; for it matters but little how plain the food, it always is eaten with relish and digested with ease if taken out of doors. I do not mean a great picnic, for these are always a weariness to the responsible heads of the affair; I suggest them simply for the family.

Get, if possible, the husband to join you, and though he may think it is foolish, ten to one he will be the happiest one of the company, and you will get a fresh glimpse of the heart that won yours, which has been covered so deep with business that you were afraid it was lost. Perhaps you are not strong enough for this; well, then, sit out of doors whenever the weather will permit. Out door life is the best "all-healing," all-restoring remedy I know of, whether for body or spirit, head or heart. Moonlight walks are very delightful to old folks and children, as well as to young lovers. Let your children look for the new moon as a token that the evening for a charming, chatty ramble is near, a thousand fold more healthful than any



---

amusement you can invent. I wonder we count so much on expensive evening entertainments, when the glory of the Lord shines out every clear night, and yet because it is so common we forget to admire and enjoy it. When we are worn with work, are wearied by failure, or perplexed by plans, there is nothing which so steadies, soothes and strengthens as an hour or two out of doors by night or day.

I once sat on a porch at twilight with a little boy in my lap. His bright, plump face glowed with coaxing admiration as he turned it upward, saying, "Moon and star, come down to me." After an expectant delay he seemed to remember that *please* was a powerful word for procuring pleasures in his happy circle. Feeling sure of success this time, each tiny hand was extended, with palms upward, ready to receive the gifts when they descended, as he said, "Moon and star, *please do* come down to me." Finding that even "please" did not bring them, he gently laid his hands in his lap, and with a soft sigh of resignation, he said, "Mamma, moon and star too high for me!" but still with radiant face he gazed up admiringly. I then thought terror and trouble would come to us if, in maturer years, we had our own way at all times, just as in mercy moon and star were held in their course despite childish pleadings. So, when our hopes are deferred, or plans fail, we may by a contemplation of Nature's quiet grandeur grow calm and content, saying: "All this which we asked was too high for us."



Let us trust to Him who holds the stars, clothes the lilies, and cares for the sparrows, that He will also provide us with work or with rest, giving the needed prosperity to the one and the necessary pleasure with the other, if we fold our hands reverently and do not clamor for that which is "too high" for us.



## VII.

### Some Thoughts on Society and Social Life.

LADIES: The women of this generation have not the same work to do that filled the hearts, heads and hands of those of the past, and very few have found a substitute for the "lost arts," or rather those which machinery has monopolized; nevertheless, "over-work," "worn out with care," etc., are the most common complaints which we hear from chronic invalids.

What can the matter be? There must surely be something wrong somewhere. Now that spinning, weaving, washing, knitting, sewing and embroidery are so largely done by machinery, beside sundry inventions to lighten domestic labor, and strong foreign hands for household service, how is it that the American women of this generation are so much more overburdened than those of the past?

The query reminds me of an early friend of my father's who, when he was first married, told his wife that he meant to be rich; but his wife said that she did not want to be rich, she only wanted to be comfortable. The husband got rich, but the wife never got comfortable. He rejoiced in his gain; but neither wealth nor "modern con-



veniencies " could make *her* comfortable. Now, to "pick up" and "pick at" the familiar faults which invite feminine infirmities, and prevent women from being "comfortable" when it seems as if they ought to be, is the object of this letter.

We hear much about being weary with calls and worn out with company. The social element of our nature should be a source of strength and cheer, not of exhaustion and invalidism. If the latter, there must be some fault in the way in which we visit and are visited. If calls and company impose so heavy a tax that we cannot meet it without becoming physically bankrupt, we had better rebel against the laws of society and make a "Declaration of Independence." By so doing, I fancy we may not only emancipate ourselves, but our friends also, from a burdensome bondage. When *we* are at ease, we are quite sure to make those about us so.

Have we company for the day? Show them the house and grounds; a place to rest; what we have in the way of books and pictures; and then visit with them when we have time and strength to spare. More than this must necessarily be dull and uninteresting to our guests, for "made" talk has no cheer in it for anybody. Many a woman seems to think she is conscientiously doing her Christian duty when she is hurried with calls and harassed with company for which she "don't care a fig." She talks of her great responsibility as a wife and mother, and seems to think she meets it well if she maintains the



---

highest social position possible, and so well-nigh sunders body and spirit in her effort to keep the family “up with the style of the times.” Look over the “claims of society” upon you, and see how much you can curtail them and still be ready for the reckoning of the Master. I do not mean, by saying this, that you must not still be in sympathy with the church to which you belong, or with the social circle in which you move, but I mean, a higher element is needed to keep up to the line of life laid out in that sermon of our Lord which says, “Ye are the salt of the earth,” “the light of the world.” Would not your salt have more savor, your light shine brighter, if you lessened your social cares? “Godliness with contentment is great gain,” in many ways, in every way.

Within the two lids of that “best of books” are simple rules which in spirit cover every relationship of life—at least all family and social claims. For instance: Do you think you ought to show your hospitality by making a grand party—make yourself a world of work, upset all your family arrangements so that they cannot be settled for weeks, that you may feed some hundreds with unwholesome food at unseasonable hours, and thus take all these friends from their own firesides, where they are needed, and where they would be tenfold more comfortable, to give them a bad night’s rest and several bad days afterward? Is this Christian hospitality? What says the Word? “When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, for they cannot recompense



thee; but thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."

Do you like the recompense, or is the day of reward too far distant to suit your ideas of prompt payment?

As to the labor required, it is much easier to feed hungry people acceptably than to please the palates of those already fed to the full.

Do you want to extend Christian courtesy in the way of calls? Shall you hire a carriage, and start out with parasol, card case, etc., to see those who are tired with calls, and worn out with company, and who would prefer seeing your card rather than yourself any time? Or will you be of those to whom Jesus will say: "I was sick and ye visited Me; in prison, and ye came unto Me?" I do not mean by this that you should find place in your own social circle for every forlornity that you would wish to help. But I do think there is some way to keep bright and strong the links between you and those less favored, so that you can help them up easily, gracefully, a step higher—possible even to your own level.

"The poor ye have always with you, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good." So, surely, we need not waste our food, our funds, or our time on those who do not need it. Work which needs to be done brings in return strength to the worker, while those who waste their energies have no such source of healthful invigoration. Hence we note often and with wonder how much those endure who have some good purpose to accomplish, while



---

those grow weak and sickly who have no ennobling work to sustain and strengthen them.

Many years ago we had among our invalid band a lady who was greatly admired for her native ability, her many and varied accomplishments. One day she said, "Do you think I will ever get well?" To which I replied, "I think you might get well, but do not think you ever will." She looked surprised, and inquired, "Why?" "Because," I said, "you have no object in life commensurate with your abilities; and a woman of your power of mind and body suffers more from this lack than one less richly endowed." She looked very thoughtful for a moment, and then said, "You are right. I have no work which satisfies me; and, what is worse, I don't know where to find any which my friends would be willing to have me engage in." Then followed a frank confession of the utter barrenness of the life of this brilliant woman. Some years after, I spent a few days in her city home, where paintings and statuary, carpets and upholstery, all united to please the eye. She had that native grace of manner which enabled her to charm all about her. In her dining-room she took private dancing lessons of a polite Frenchman, because some young nieces wanted "auntie to help fill out a set." In the parlor she played and sang the grave or gay, just as her visitors desired. She helped the poor in private, and was seemingly an outside pillar to all the benevolent institutions in the city. With all this wealth, these accomplishments, this admiration, both in public



and in private life, was she happy? Hear her own confession: "My life is entirely unsatisfactory. Seldom have I an hour to give to pursuits congenial to my tastes or comforting to my heart. I am weary of this world of fashion in which I live. I am a slave to society. Once I fancied that some time I should grow strong enough to emancipate myself, but now I am so deeply enchained that death alone can set me free." I said to her, "Cut loose from this routine of calls and company, and carve out for yourself a course of life such as your own conscience approves." To which she replied, "I have just looked over the list of my calling acquaintances, and have dropped fifty—all I dared to—and retained two hundred from whom I have not the courage to cut loose." "Of the two hundred retained, how many are there in whom you have any real interest?" I inquired. "Not fifty of them do I care *that* for," said she, with a snap of her jeweled fingers.

Doubtless this indifference was, to a great extent, mutual, but neither party had sufficient decision of character to break away from custom. What a wearisome, worthless way to waste Heaven's good gifts—time and strength, which might bless so many! Washing, street sweeping or rag picking is better for both body and spirit, and of more service to the world than living to call on those we don't care for, and who don't care for us. Of all living lies there seems less apology for these than any others.



---

But you ask, "Must all calls be for charitable purposes?" Certainly not: Go to see your friends if you have anything to say to them or to do for them, or they for you, and then you will not go amiss. "Like begets like." If you want to see them, they do you. To every rule there are exceptions. Of course there are unwelcome guests—insects which annoy, and must be borne or brushed off again and again. There are those now, as of old, who "spend their time to hear or to tell some new thing," and that not to any one's advantage. But if we are really anxious to be useful, we will soon find ourselves members of a social circle of a very different character.

Often some of the finest elements of our nature for strength and cheer are buried beneath social shams. There should be an interchange of solace, strength and cheer with those about us; not waste, weakness and weariness, in the vain effort to keep up an artificial interest, a show of gaiety and social standing, which has no substantial support in the head or heart. I once said to an earnest Christian friend that I could not see how the religious world, which denounces dancing parties, countenanced these large assemblies at night, with refreshments at ten o'clock and a grand supper at twelve, to which is added bad dressing, unwholesome food, late hours and no profitable conversation—nothing but small talk, and that to my mind they had not a redeeming feature, and I could not see that "shaking heel and toe" to the sound of music would make them better or worse. To which she replied:



“Many women in these days have too much conscience to dance, and not sense enough to talk, and so they eat and dress.” Whether this criticism of an intelligent Baptist sister, many years ago, applies to our age I will not say. The question is often asked, whether the children of Christian parents should be allowed to go to parties, theaters, or other gatherings where late hours and sundry other sins tend to deteriorate their spiritual, mental and physical natures.

There was a strong element of common sense in that old Jewish law which held parents responsible for the keeping of the statutes and ordinances of the Most High by their children, until they had attained a certain age, and then, with public ceremony, the responsibility was transferred to the child, after which it must give account to the great Jehovah.

There are years (how many I cannot say) when parents can hold their children to healthful habits for body and spirit, but sooner or later, manhood and womanhood, or, rather, boyhood and girlhood, clamor for individual sovereignty. Sometimes, such has been the success of home training, and such the plasticity of the youthful nature, that there is no real change, so perfectly is the child and parent one. But there are plenty of perverse spirits who prove for a time prodigal sons and prodigal daughters. If the home training has been a happy one, such will return in penitence before they have lived long on husks. Many will not wander far enough to waste much in riotous



---

living—only to taste a little of this and that gilded pleasure, to find that it falls so far short of the higher joy home has given that they have no wish to wander further.

Let us try to early implant a cheerful religious faith, so that children shall feel that the Father in Heaven would debar them no real, healthful pleasure; that He invites them, all along life's journey, to deny themselves this that He may give them something better. Here and there are paths which allure, but do not satisfy. Do not blame and denounce them when they want to know by experience what *you* learned in the same way, and thus make them feel repelled and estranged, and so rush on into deeper dissipation to drown disappointment, or in the vain hope of realizing some ideal pleasure. No; rather help them everywhere to see your hand—yea, more, the Heavenly Hand, beckoning them back to paths of simplicity, purity, and peace.

A story will illustrate: A young miss of simple habits and early hours is going out to her first large party, which is to gather when people ought to go to bed, have a grand dinner at the noon of night, and break up in the small hours. Her dress is white, with a tiny dot of blue, and trimmings to match—well suited to her brown hair, which curls so naturally in its rich abundance.

Her mother has her own delight that her once baby daughter has grown to be such a fine-looking young lady, and is half glad that she is to be gratified in seeing the



gay world, and half sad that she is now to take her first sail on that social sea where so many wreck all healthful habits of body and spirit.

When she had finished dressing, she said: "Mother, let us read our evening chapter before I go," and she turned to the fifty-fifth chapter of Isaiah, which was next in course, and read with tender tremulousness, "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which satisfieth not?" These words of the prophet, spoken to that chosen but wayward people of old, seemed equally a clear note of parental warning to a Christian child looking for pleasure in social life. "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways," saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." As she finished reading, the mother said, "Whenever we wander for pleasure and find it not, the good Lord is saying, "Return to Me, and I will give you rest, joy and peace."

At the genteel hour for going, enveloped in winter wrappings, she gave the good night kiss, each face bearing a smile and a tear. From the mother's heart went up a silent prayer that this dear child, for the first time outside the family fold at night, might be protected from harm; and when she finds, as she must, the new field a dry and thirsty one, withered with envy and pride, that she may hearken to the voice which says, "Ho! every one



that thirsteth." Christians, old or young, whose chief comfort is social gaiety, well may sing,

"Lord, what a wretched land is this,  
Which yields us no supply."

Many a young lady, after leaving school, soon finds the ordinary round of social life unsatisfactory, and turns to philanthropic or other useful work. I have watched such, and have been pleased to note that unrest and discontent disappeared from the countenance, and instead came an expression of hope and peace.



## VIII.

### Some of the Trials of Married Life.

“Marriage is a figure and an earnest of holier things unseen,  
And reverence well becometh the symbol of dignity and glory.”

LADIES: We may truly say, with Tupper,

Where the golden chain of godliness is entwined with the roses of  
love.”

“Oh, happy lot, and hallowed, even as the joy of angels.”

But when husbands and wives talk of their rights, of the other's duties, we fear they have fallen short of that high and perfect unity which makes one forgetful of self. Those who truly love are bound by better, brighter links than those of right or duty. There are exacting women with whom a husband, even, never feels the freedom of love, but is always in bondage to courtesy or ceremony. I remember that air of triumph with which one of these opened a letter from her husband, written within an hour after she had left him, saying, as she read, “There! I knew I should hear from him soon; for he forgot to ask me to write to him when he took leave of me at the cars, and he knew I would not send a word, if I stayed away all winter, unless he asked me to do so.” To this I said, “It is



---

not possible that you need an assurance from your husband that he wants to hear from you?" She answered, "No doubt he is always very anxious for letters when I am away; but he has got to ask for them before he gets them, and he knows it, too!"

The way in which some married persons speak of their life-partners is often suggestive as to the grade or character of the relationship they sustain to each other. For instance, when a wife says, with an air of contentment, "My husband is very indulgent," it suggests childhood rather than intelligent, helpful, loving copartnership. Or when the husband leaves an invalid wife in my care and tells me he does not want me to allow her to do thus and so, it conveys the same idea.

We often hear it said of a husband that he is fond of his wife; well, so he is of his beefsteak and coffee, and it appears as if she were placed in the same category of creature comforts. When a wife evidently wishing to say the best possible of her husband, assures me that he is a "good provider," you conclude that he is to her like the Dutch woman's husband, "the most convenientest thing about the house, except the new cooking stove." Now, marriage in its true estate implies good providing on the part of both, as far as possible.

To sustain a good home requires not only a steady income, but an intelligent expenditure. A loving wife, possessing health and sense, will make the family supplies last like the widow's cruse of oil; but, lacking these,



she will soon breed a famine or bring her husband to bankruptcy.

All cool calculations as to whether a man can afford to marry grate harshly on the soul of real womanhood. As if a wife is to be an expensive luxury, like a fine house or a fast horse, that one must have a large income to sustain in proper style. We don't wonder that thoughtful, reliable young men are afraid to marry, lest they may not be able to meet home expenses. The way in which some unwise women ignore domestic work; the smirk and sneer with which they shirk everything that helps to cover the body or supply the stomach is enough to make one afraid to become a responsible partner with such. Poor pictures, poor music and poor bread make a poor home, even when it is warmed by an abundance of gay worsted work. Beside this, the way in which a multitude of modern wives whine and worry about their domestic cares is enough to disgust any sensible man, and make him dread family responsibilities. Yes, we are sorry that our best young men are afraid to marry, but we do not wonder at it. Now, men's hearts grow dry and women's desolate for want of that companionship which is found only in a happy marriage. Woman alone in the world often seems to stand as a cipher; at the right side of the right man she counts ten; at the wrong side of the wrong man she is like a decimal, and diminishes him tenfold. If our young folks were as ready to commence housekeeping in a small way, as their parents did, and the young wife was,



like her grandmother, a helpmeet indeed, then they could go on comfortably, with a small salary, and the number of indigent husbands and invalid wives would be greatly diminished. Beginning with a fine establishment, which in itself invites much company and calls for a retinue of servants, the young mistress fails, under the combined cares of housekeeping and maternity. If she has no children she is usually worse off still.

I was once called to a thriving town in the southern part of New York to see an invalid wife. The husband, a man with a world of business on hand, met me at the station. As we made our way through the finest street to his elegant residence, he told me this story, which is a sample of many I hear: He had married a country girl, in good health, who had helped a widowed mother to do her work. He had brought her to a home of abundance, furnished her with plenty of hired help, and though unburdened with business or babies, she had broken in health and, what was still more discouraging, he had the best of physicians, and yet she was no better, but rather worse. He was disgusted with the doctors, though they were his personal friends, and had sent for me to see whether he must always have a sick wife; if so, he must learn to bear it. He loved her, and would be glad to make her well and happy, if he only knew how. I found the invalid wife in an easy chair, handsomely attired, her pretty slippers resting on an embroidered stool. She had a fine physical organization, power enough of mind and



body to accomplish great good, if well directed, and to work much mischief if misapplied. It seemed that without any acute sickness, or assignable cause, she had become dyspeptic, weak in the back, and unable to walk. She had been treated for all manner of infirmities, special and general, without effect. When the husband took me back to the railroad station, he said,

“Do you know what is the matter with my wife?”

“Yes.”

“Will you tell me?”

“Yes, if you are ready for the truth.”

“I am,” he answered.

“Well, you are occupied with your store, your farm and your mill, which satisfies you; and as to your social nature, you are generous and kind, but not demonstrative. That beautiful wife of yours has nothing to do but to think of her house, think of her dress, think of you. The result is, she has all kinds of longings, when you are out of sight, and no real rest when you return; for with your head and hands full, you have little time for petting and caressing her when at home. When you are gone, she fears she does not please you, and gets a heart-ache, which, when it is chronic, begets all manner of aches, from top to toe, and especially simulates, and often induces, that class of infirmities which bear the very disagreeable cognomen of ‘Female Diseases.’”

The strong man listened to all this and much more, with the quiet deference of a child, and said, with a sigh,



“I guess you are right! Has she told you this?”

“No,” I replied, “she is deluded with the idea that she is diseased.”

“Well,” said he, “what can I do about it? I thought I had done well for her when I took her from domestic drudgery and placed her in this nice home, with everything at hand.”

“Put you in such a place,” I replied, “and thus cramp your energies, and you would be restless as a lion, and cross as a bear, instead of meekly dreaming yourself into desponding invalidism.”

“Oh, I could not live so!” he replied.

Neither can a woman who has any real soul. When “olive plants” are plenty to care for, a woman may have head, hand and heart well employed. But, lacking these, she must have other work. We talk of maiden ladies growing selfish, nervous and exacting, or, as we say, “notional,” but I have seen more married women who bear these marks. Husbands, over-indulgent, often intensify these peculiarities, and then grow weary of what they have induced. They frequently pet and circumscribe their wives’ energies, and then wonder why they grow so weak and exacting. A very distinguished statesman, whom I greatly respect, was conferring with me in reference to his invalid wife, feeling sorry that she had lost her native energy and cheer. I told him she had nothing to do which would keep either alive. And so we had a pleasant parley, not on politics, but on woman’s needs; he maintaining



that his wife was much too delicate to do anything, and I, that she would be delicate until she did do something. But, seriously, many good men, wise men, generous men, fail to see that they should help their wives and daughters to some encouraging, ennobling work. Infirmities, both imaginary and real, would be lessened, often cured, by an occupation corresponding with the needs of the head and heart.

The sorrow and solicitude which many have from the fear that they are not appreciated, not loved, would vanish before useful work, like mist before the rising sun. Almost every wife sees in her husband not only some manly elements, which first won her heart, but also some peculiarities which frequently try her spirit, perhaps sorely. On the latter she dwells till it wears and wears, and she says with a sigh, "I have one of the best of husbands, but he is peculiar and don't seem to understand me; he was differently brought up;" or, "Men can't appreciate a woman's sensibilities;" or, "This is just what I thought I could never bear in a husband; if it had been anything else I could have stood it better." Well, perhaps it is just what is hardest for you to endure, and if so, it is doubtless what you most needed. The intelligent gymnast, or skillful physician giving Swedish movements, taxes those muscles which are debilitated by disease; so our mental and moral natures reflect their dormant power, and are aroused and strengthened by the bearing of that which we think we cannot endure. As the German peasant wo-



men walk strong and erect with the heavy burdens they carry on their heads, so the Christian woman's spiritual nature is steadied and strengthened by every load she sustains well.

I have been surprised to see how strong and beautiful some women have grown, whose lot seems to be very hard; and often more surprised to see how weak and selfish some have become, who seemingly had multiplied social blessings. Our Lord said truly, "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in Me ye might have peace." Not merely petty, poetical trials, such as over-sensitive ones find and idealists make, but real, genuine trouble, which is hard to bear, and can only be borne rightly by the aid of the Good Spirit. As to whether trials come as Fatherly discipline, or through the Prince of Evil, as in Job's case, we need not decide, for, in either case, if we find the heavenly Helper we shall be bettered thereby. The best of saints often seem to suffer more than sinners, and perhaps thereby realize the exceeding sinfulness of sin; the most perfect peacemakers have passed through the most heart-rending trials.

Those who live merely to be pretty and happy fall short, physically and spiritually, of that unto which they should attain. Those happy unions where both parties live to please each other develop a devotion which is truly charming; but if they know no higher aim in life than to please, they are not strong in the Lord. Their piety is of the esthetical type rather than the self-denying. Women



who thus live have a sort of refined selfishness, which often shows them to be very much unlike Him who pleased not Himself. When bereaved, their "idol is broken, their earth-star is fled," and they have to hunt anew for the heavenly Light which they once thought they had found.

"But," says one, "why do we find so many women delicate, diseased, in the most charming of Christian homes, with the most considerate of husbands at the head of the same—homes where all that wealth, intelligence and affection can do is done to make the inmates healthy and happy; where farm, garden and greenhouse; where libraries, parlors and boudoirs; where music, painting and statuary all unite to gratify every sense?" Such are truly overburdened by beauties and blessings. Excess enfeebles as surely as a scarcity. The life led by such women begets an over-sensitive nervous system. They fail of that muscular as well as moral tonic which is mysteriously given to those who live simply, that they may help others more abundantly. Those whose chief aim is to beautify themselves and their surroundings, never find the true fountain of strength and cheer. We all saw in our late war how much "weak woman" could do when strengthened by the consciousness of a greatly needed work. Wives and mothers in private life are quietly teaching this lesson every day, and few know that their strength comes not from themselves, but from their work.

When husband and wife stand hand to hand, heart to



heart, they are strong in the Lord and in each other. If we live in Christ, we shall both labor and suffer with Him, because of this world of sin. Paul says, "Bear ye one another's burdens," and then, lest any should think by this that they might lean heavily, says also, "Let every one bear his own burdens."



## IX.

### Suggestions for Brightening Shadowed Homes.

“Domestic happiness, thou only bliss  
Of Paradise that has survived the Fall—  
Though few now taste thee unimpaired and pure,  
Or, tasting, long enjoy!—oft neglect  
Or temper sheds into thy crystal cup  
Some drops of bitterness.”

LADIES: Our correspondence is not so one-sided as it may appear at first, for much that is to be said is in answer to some personal interviews or questions penned by some of the sisterhood. Hence that familiarity which characterizes a letter to a friend must to some extent exist here. How to save from social sorrow, or, rather, how to soothe when it does come, is the object of this letter.

We find many women more worn by the unrest in their domestic relations than by any active labor—made sick even more by heartache than by actual disease; not ideal but real infirmity, the result of unsatisfied yearnings and hopeless repinings. A wounded spirit who can bear without being broken in health? Surely no woman of delicate sensibilities, unless Heaven help her. Most wives



---

expect too much in the married relation. "Bliss, a native of the skies, never wanders."

"In vain we boast perfection here,  
While sin defiles our frame."

If our husbands are not what we wish—and very few are in every respect—we should try to help them to become so.

Look at the faults which come from bad health, bad inheritance and bad training, and try to make up in our own persons for all these deficiencies as far as we can; at least bear with a good spirit what we cannot cure. The charity that Paul defines is the best recipe ever given a wife to make home happy: "The charity that suffereth long and is kind." We are apt to expect too much of manhood, even, and hence, instead of a pleasant surprise, experience a sad disappointment. Better conform to the old negro's text: "Expect nothing, and thou shalt not be disappointed." Thereby we may have many an unexpected joy. Too many wives expect "to be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease" by husbandly hands, and are often, after a few weeks or months, in the condition described in the boy's composition: "I soared on angels' wings high over the steeple of the meeting house, and came down on the wood-pile and hurt my shins!"

With all the poetry of married life, in which, from personal experience, many of us can testify there are very sweet pages—still, for most, there are lines of very plain, if not painful, prose. Every human heart, whether married or single, sees times when it sings or says, "Life is



a desert drear." When these shadows come to maiden hearts, they think it is for lack of a mate; when they come to married hearts, they think it is because they are ill-mated; whereas these times come, often, because we are sick in body, and sometimes because of a sinful or over-sentimental spirit. When these periods of depression come, we are very likely to feel that our nearest friend is in fault for it. If we have husbands, we fancy that they have helped us into the darkness, and should help us out. Whoever is our bosom friend we look to to brighten us, even if we do not blame them for the blight which rests upon us. Do not understand me as saying that we should look for no arm to lean upon in this life, no heart but a heavenly one to help us. Our Father above recognized this social want in the Garden of Eden. Jesus, cognizant of the same, sent out His disciples two by two. Yea, He had His beloved, in the person of John, who leaned on His bosom, who was to Him true and tender in life, in death, and after His ascension.

But we do not all find a John for our beloved. Perchance it is a Peter—ardent, impulsive, and promising all things in the way of devotion, and now denying it all; next equally persistent, only not as ready to own or show it as was Peter of old. My impression is that it is not usually as easy for men to "own up" as it is for women. The former will show, by increased tenderness of manner, that they are sorry for the hasty word, but do not want to say so. This showing sorry should be accepted in the



---

place of saying sorry, though we prefer both. Confess your faults one to another, is Paul's advice, and makes an excellent prescription for promoting peace in every position. A tender conscience always prompts to a peace offering; but with some the words come more easily than with others. A little girl who had done wrong said: "Mamma, it hurts so, I cannot help confessing it." But her brother, when he was in fault, would smooth his mother's hair, ask if she was tired, offer to wait upon her, and thus show that he was sorry without saying so. I do not think that there is any distinct line in this respect, but merely that the tender demonstrations of either penitence or pity are peculiar to women. Still, I have met many wives who were proud and imperious, never ready to feel that they were in fault, and less ready to own it, even when their hearts were aching for the fountain of tenderness which they would have found by confession.

Children, when they get into a quarrel, excuse themselves by saying, "You began it!" I have seen many a wife, present and prospective, exhibit the same feeling, and so would not compromise her dignity by taking the first step toward reconciliation. So truly should we study for those things which are for peace, that we should be on the alert to apologize or explain in case of a misunderstanding, even though we did not begin it. In short, we should not only be ready to confess our own faults, but also to help others to confess theirs. The first kindly word will usually loosen the tongue, and melt the heart



which has been frozen with hate, and from both will flow the milk of human kindness, rich with the cream of tender love.

A wife once said to me in her days of darkness: "Is it possible to both love and hate a person at the same time? It seems to me that is just the way I feel toward my husband. When he was tired he was rude to me. I know by his increased gentleness of manner that he is sorry, yet he don't say so, and somehow I cannot get over it, and am so wretched. If he would only say he was sorry it would drive away the shadow between us." Yes, a pleasant word is most soothing to woman's sensitive nature. I have much faith in confession; not only the wife, but the husband also, feel more comfortable after it—at least such is *my opinion*. So whoever has a delicate tact at helping us to do this difficult duty does good to both parties. Not only husbands, but children, need this help; indeed, so do all. Our Savior said truly: "Offenses will come," and gave the prescription for all time, "Go and tell it between thee and him alone." By neglecting to do so, husbands, lovers, church members and neighbors are often permanently estranged. These unspoken troubles, nourished by secret thought, mar the growth of character like the unseen grub in the choice tree.

We have seen many a wife more worn by some little incongruities in her husband, which she could neither cure nor well endure, than by all the cares of maternity and housewifery.



---

Thus far we have dwelt only on the vexations and petty trials, which are as the little foxes or the little flies which mar or destroy much domestic bliss. Beside these, there are real sorrows which sometimes come to the true and noble wife, which make her heart thrill with an agony unknown before, and which can never be repeated. It is when, after years of loyal repose, she finds that the king of her heart and lord of her home, like King Solomon, "loves many strange women"—that the caresses she receives are shared by sundry other persons wanting in personal grace or personal beauty. May Heaven help such wives to live under their load of agony, for no human hand can help them to walk patiently and cheerfully through the rest of their life journey. To such there is darkness over all the land, but the Star of Bethlehem shines for those, as for all who sin or who sorrow from any cause.

No great trial leaves us as it found us—we are either better or worse for it. Out of the heart mellowed by grief grows the choicest wheat or the rankest tares. Look over the faces of your friends and see either the ripening grace of grief well borne or ill borne. The giving up of a great hope is like the setting of the sun; "but, after that, the stars come out and the night is holy," says Longfellow. May all you who have seen such a social sunset, whether by sin or by death, whether in husband or children, find also the starlight. But sorry I am to say that some of these injured wives do not look to the Heavenly Helper for power to do and to bear, but turn to the god



of this world. Such persons often rush into all manner of gaieties to dissipate the painful memories, and so grow trifling, and frequently heartless and hard. Such jolly laughs as I have heard come from a heart broken and bitter I have no words to describe. Affectation in woman is always unpleasant, but artificial mirth is unspeakably sad. Nothing so steels the finer sensibilities of her nature.

Many a devoted husband and fond father is led from the path of purity by strong drink. It benumbs the higher faculties and over-stimulates the base of the brain, developing the baser elements of human nature. Intemperance steals on its victim so stealthily, under the guise of the social glass, or the slight stimulant when the "good man" is over-wearied, that often the vigilant eye of love fails to see the danger until too late. The hurried life led by most men in successful business, with its competition, makes the temptation to stimulants very great, not at first taken from a relish, but merely to keep going when rest is needed. This or that scheme for money-making requires watching; and so to hold the weary head at work a glass of brandy is taken now and then. I fancy many a generous husband does this because he wants his family to live in as fine style as their neighbors, and longs to have the prospect of leaving them "well off."

Wives should look well to home expenses, and see to it that their extravagance does not drive their husbands into plans for money-making which are not founded on Christian principles. All forms of speculation induce such intense



---

solicitude as exhausts the nervous system, and then comes the longing for something to supply the lack. Should the scheme prove a success, alcohol must heighten and brighten the joy; if a failure, it must sustain under the consequent depression!

It is said that many men go to the saloon, the club-room, the tavern, because their wives fail to make home happy. This may be a temptation *to go*, but it is not a reasons *for going*. If a man has not chosen a good helpmeet to make a happy home, why there is the more for him to do there, and he should be on hand to do it. Out of the world of women he had his choice, or, if he did not he should not have had any one, and now, in the language of the ceremony, he has her "for better or for worse," and if he finds it for the worse, he should try to make the best of it at home and abroad.

But I am writing to ladies, and so will leave the husbands with this sample of what I *might* say were I addressing them.

But, seriously, if husbands are not what we desire, do not dwell upon their faults and talk them over with your "very dear friend" till she so overflows with sympathy that you begin to feel sadly abused and dream of a separation. A larger latitude for divorce than that given by our Lord does not seem to me to promise more domestic peace. I note often that those who have rushed out of an unhappy union on the ground of "incompatibility," are just as ready to rush into another marriage seemingly



as injudicious as the one they have just escaped from. Wisdom, strength, peace, do not come by running away from trial, but by meeting it well. "Beware of entrance to a quarrel, but, being in, bear it," says Shakespeare; so say we of marriage.

When the one sin which, in the eye of the Master, sunders the marriage tie, if there be no penitence on the part of the one, no forgiving love on the part of the other, then complete the divorce by the necessary legal measures. But if sorrow for sin and love for the sinner still live, then let them build anew as best they can the domestic bower, though the choicest buds of beauty can never bloom again; the fragrance of restful love is forever gone. May such saddened hearts catch the spirit of Him who said to the sinning woman; "Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more." In this way only can the injured party be saved from bitterness of heart and hopeless estrangement. Through Jesus they may learn to say, "Father, forgive them."



## X.

### Work for Women.—Orphan Children.

LADIES: Now for the question suggested in a former letter. What shall a woman do to keep body and soul healthfully alive, who has no little ones to occupy her time and means? Some give themselves to ornamental work, and though it diverts for a time, weak eyes, over-sensitive nerves and unsatisfied hearts are the usual result. "Paying business," outside the home circle, is rare for women. Beside this, most men, "well to do," pride themselves on providing well for their families, and perhaps would not fancy having their wives develop their money-making abilities. Women, to my certain knowledge, have this ability, for they will make a good living on a very small capital, and do great good with very little money. Possibly it is money saving, rather than money making, by which they get on so well. "A penny saved is as good as a penny earned," and better than one gotten by craft.

But to the question: What should those ladies do who have little or no family work, and whose pecuniary wants are all met without effort on their part? Shall they exhaust their surplus of time and strength in social life, and burden those who are already tired to death with company? No, no, no! "The poor ye have always with you, and whensoever ye will, ye may do them good." Well,



how? Work for sewing societies, relief associations, homes for the friendless? Yes; all this is good. But for many there is a way better still. Let me give a story to illustrate: Among my first patients was a bright-eyed young wife, who, when she got well, concluded that in order to keep well she must have some more active employment than genteel boarding afforded, and so went to house-keeping. On visiting her I found she had a charming home, on a rise of ground just out of the city, where she was living nicely and healthfully. I commended her for the happy blending of health, taste and economy in her home arrangements; but said, "I am sorry to have you expend all your motherly love on these cats, dogs and canaries when the city so overflows with motherless children that the large orphan asylum just in sight is crowded with little ones longing for what you lavish on these pet animals." A few months afterward she wrote me of the black-eyed little girl they had taken, and said it was difficult to tell which enjoyed life most—she who had gotten a home, or they who had given one. When visiting them some years later I found the husband with a little girl on each knee, in dress and manners so alike that they looked as if they were twins, though there was no tie but love between them. On asking her what led her to take the second, she said: "I concluded I could bring up two just as well as one, as they could amuse each other, and thus not require so much attention from me. As for dress, it costs no more to clothe both than I expended



---

on the one. I always buy the same things for each at the same time, and so shopping takes no more time for two than one. As for money, I spent too much on one, and so have divided the same between the two." I need not tell you that she was better in every way than when she had little to do but read, dress and visit, and that I have not had her for a patient since.

We have another friend who has made the wonderful discovery that she can take care of three children easier than two, and, strange to say, one of them is a boy, and none of them her own, save by adoption. First, a sweet little girl of three years, who bore her name, given her by a dying mother. In the same motherless flock was an incurable invalid two years older, which the noble woman felt must not be separated from this sister to whom she was so much attached, so she took them both. The little girls had inherited from their sainted mother a delicate physical and sensitive spiritual nature. Mrs. ——— was wise in her care of their little bodies, and saw that it was easier for them to grow good than to grow strong. So she invented all manner of ways to lead them into outdoor amusements; made tents for summer; and for winter, overalls of heavy flannel, reaching from neck and wrists to toe-tips, so that they could tumble in the snow and still keep dry and warm. All this did well; but she needed a boy to help them on with their muscular and outdoor sports. The boy came, a fierce three-year old, who, when crossed in will, could use fists and feet also.



We all wondered what such a buxom boy would do with such sensitive girls, but were glad to note how he was subdued and settled into orderly ways by her steady, straightforward family discipline, so that he seemed to us the best behaved boy on the hillside. By him these little girls, more thoughtful and sensitive, were strengthened by many a good laugh and brisk sport, while they mellowed and molded him into gentler ways. The foster-mother of them all maintains that the little girls live out of doors so much more, and are now so free from colds and croup, that they give her less care than before.

It is an old proverb, that "a hen will do as much scratching for one chicken as for a dozen." This is quite as true in reference to families as to fowls. Indeed, there are many only sons and only daughters that have so much scratching done for them that they fail to scratch for themselves.

Many women will always be denied God's best of all gifts—the gift of children. Many children will be early deprived of God's best gift—a mother. Therefore let the two desolate parties come together and comfort each other. Don't delay, hoping a baby will be left on your door-step, like the devout pair who had been wanting to adopt a child and praying about it for years, but because a foundling was picked up on a neighbor's doorstep instead of theirs, thought it a providential indication that there was no child for them, and did not dare to take this little one, so it was taken to a foundling hospital.



---

The little ones needing the crumbs which are left of our abundance are not far off; they may, like Lazarus of old, be at the gate; they may be at a neighboring shanty or gathered in charity homes, awaiting our selection. Don't stop to catechize yourself till you doubt whether you can love another child as well as your own; as to whether you would want it to take your name or inherit your estate; as to whether you would be willing to have it call you mother, while you wipe away its tears with your own pocket handkerchief. All these points will settle themselves in due time. Suppose you can't love it as you could your own child, give what you can, which is much better than none. But the good Father has so made us that when we serve others we begin to love them.

Don't try to force your heart or your lips into a fondness for these little forlornities that you don't feel, for it is a sure way to blight the growth of healthy, happy love. Be truthful for your own good, for the good of the children, for they know by instinct who loves them and who not. Meet first their physical wants for Jesus' sake, for humanity's sake, and the love will come which makes it easy to clothe needy bodies and comfort aching hearts.

If the life and strength spent in mourning over the little ones gathered by the Good Shepherd could be given those who lack an earthly fold, bereaved parents and bereaved children would be wonderfully blessed. On those who sit in the shadow of a great sorrow, a softened sunlight falls so soon as they try to help and comfort others.



Many a heart made desolate by the death or desertion of its early lover, could find comfort in this Christian work better than any other. Don't imagine because you have no husband that therefore you should take no children to train up. A good husband is a great help in this noble work; but every one can't have a husband. Let all who can, glean for themselves the rich joy which comes from the care of the motherless. Many unmarried women expend their time and means in educating young men for professions. This is well; but they might get and give more comfort by training up from childhood ministering men and ministering women from the ranks of the neglected ones. Little ones should not go in large flocks, but fill the chinks between adults. If there is room in the heart there is room in the house—just as in a peck of potatoes there is room for a pint or more of peas.

You may say, "If I knew these homeless ones were of good parentage, I would be ready to take them into my family." Jesus ate with publicans and sinners; cannot you eat with the children of the same? He came down among such that He might help them up! Cannot we do it also? "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord." Granting that they have had a bad inheritance, which is sometimes true, there is all the more need of good home training. But you say, "These children in asylums have all the same expression of countenance, not an interesting look." Well it is true that sickness and poverty pinches out all youthful life and en-



thusiasm, and makes them grow old prematurely. Give them the sunshine of your own home, and you will see the childish gifts and graces grow as fast as leaves and flowers do in spring sunshine, and the winter which has so withered them will vanish at once.

A physician who was noted for his tenderness toward the little folk, was one day at an orphan asylum, when a sickly little flaxen-haired girl of two and a half years put up her hands pleadingly to him. He took her up and carried her around while he looked at the place. When he put her down she cried bitterly. The strong man went home and told the story with moistened eyes, and said, "The little sick face haunts me night and day." A week after he went again to the orphans' home, and the feeble little thing came tottering toward him with uplifted hands. He took her in his arms and to his home, and played nurse and mother, as well as physician, for the little invalid. Two weeks after he took her back to the asylum. As soon as she saw where she was, she grew pale and troubled. She refused to play with the children, or to go to those who had previously cared for her, but clung close to her "dockey" with anxious looks. When they left the asylum, life and joy returned to her face, and when back home she was overflowing with glee and loving demonstrations for every one. Never a child showed more plainly that she was glad to get home. The little forlorn face grows fat and joyous every day. Her little arms, so soft and loose in their attachment that it seemed as if they



would come off when taking her up by them, have grown more firm and plump. She has all the fondness of little girls for nice things, and hence has eyed keenly all the changes in her apparel, needed to fit her for her new surroundings. And though weeks have gone by, she every morning and night, and often during the day, recounts in broken language her mercies, saying, "Me got new dress; me got new stocker; me got new aper; me got new shoes!"

Children in asylums get a sort of military drill which secures obedience to orders, and makes them appear well. In short, they learn manners, and learn to obey. So the little girl above mentioned said "Yes, ma'am" to all, from grandpa of eighty to the youngest boy in the family. She had never learned to say "sir," for the reason that there was no father for the large flock of children from which she came. Of course, in these large gatherings the individuality of each child is sure to be overlooked; forty children must behave as one, not one as forty; hence this absence of vivacity.

Orphan asylums, even when they are as good as intelligent Christian effort can make them, will never satisfy the individual want of each little heart which longs for a father and mother, and feels a sad lack without them. I never visit these large homes for little folks, but I cry for joy, and for sorrow, too; glad they have so good a public home, and sorry they cannot have a private one.

The foundling Hospital at Baltimore, with its fifty babies



---

under four years old, was to me a place of touching interest. The Sister of Charity, mother of all, had a charming expression of face, and an air of refined gentility. Despite the large white bonnet which she wore in-doors as well as out, and her plain garments, she was really beautiful, so truly had her spirit overshadowed all the drapery of the flesh. I was glad that these motherless little ones could be sunned, even a little, by so sweet a spirit; for amid so many they could get only now and then a ray. When she entered the play-room for the larger children, where there were twenty or so between the ages of two and four years, there was a rush for her caresses, and an eager grasp for the cross and rosary which hung by her side. Their evident delight in these consecrated beads indicated that they had not lost their instinctive love for playthings, though there was not another article in the room to gratify this want of childhood. The bare floor, the little low seats at the sides of a room well lighted and ventilated, seemed desolate for children to whom a few toys bring so much delight. But with the little help, in proportion to the number taken care of, the Sisters said it would be impossible to allow the clatter and care which playthings bring. So they all buzz about like a swarm of bees who have no flowers to sip. It seemed a kind of aimless effort at amusement. In children reared in the best of asylums there is a lack of cheery life in the face, best described as a vacant look. The want of healthful amusement and of heart comfort which a home gives, may be among the



causes for this almost universal cast of countenance in orphan asylums.

These institutions meet a great need extremely well; but those who have a home by birth or adoption have the needs of their nature met as they can never be in these places. The long rows of little cribs, where the well ones are sleeping, and one nurse watching them, tell at once that they cannot have as much "tending" as do our babies at home. The Sisters conferred with me as to the cause of so many deaths among their infants. They had supposed it due largely to their gathering together so many in the city, but when they got a nice building well ventilated, quite out in the country, good milk, still the mortality continued, not diminishing as they had expected. Well, what was the matter? What did these little ones lack which gives life? Not a good home, not cow's milk, not the "milk of human kindness," but that of human love!

A little girl who had always been very tenderly cared for by both her parents, once said, "I live on love." During their first absence from home she failed rapidly in health, though kindly cared for by relatives and domestics. An intelligent physician was called, who decided that she was suffering from the absence of father and mother, that her disease was akin to home sickness. On hearing of their darling's decline in health, the parents hurried home. After their return she began to recover without medical treatment, and one day while riding around the room in



---

her father's arms, with a little of her old glee returning, he said, "You feel better than you did when we were away?" "Oh, yes," she said, "you see, papa, I live on love!" "Well, I guess you do, my dear child, and may you never lack it," he replied.

Yes, love is important to the life of little folks, as well as large ones. Even babies miss the hugs, kisses and caresses they get when well mothered. Half the sorrows which waste the health, vanish or diminish when honest lips say, "I'm sorry." We are all much like the little boy who hunted over house and grounds to find his mother, merely because, as he said, he wanted her to say she was "horry he had cut his hum!" When children are gathered by scores in asylums they must have many an ache of body and spirit, with no one to say to them, "I'm sorry."



## XI.

### Adopting Children.

LADIES: In response to my last letter I seem to hear many of the sisterhood saying that the advice as to the adoption of children is good for those who have a husband, home, health and ample means; but what are we forlorn ones to do who lack one, perchance all, these things? If we want to work in "the Lord's vineyard," or rather if we want to make any neglected field to bloom as "the garden of the Lord," we must not ask for some choice tract, but be ready for any service which comes to hand. "Being faithful over a few things," the Master will give work to every one of us, according to our ability, in due time. It is wonderful to note how ways and means multiply to those who possess a willing mind.

Many years ago a young lady commenced to educate herself for the medical profession. She first began to work her way as nurse and student in a sanitarium. Soon after she had completed her course of study and commenced practice, she told me that she hoped some time to have a home for invalid orphan children. The plan appeared visionary to many of her friends, that she, a lone woman without money, worn by hard work and hard



---

study, should think of having a home of her own for such a noble charity.

For years she held patiently on with her professional duties, talking to me from time to time of her plan, to which I replied, "Well, it seems to me just the thing for you, but we cannot tell. If it is, when you are ready for the work the way will open," and so it did. She now has a fine home for invalids, which is well patronized. Her purpose is to adopt such children as are destitute of funds and friends. If they have bad habits or bad health, all the more do they belong to her. A brief history of the first is this: The mother, working at a farm house, ran away and left this child. The people kept her a few months, and then placed her in the asylum at R——, where my friend found her. At that time she was the most forlorn and repulsive child in the group—her hands and face disfigured with sores. The matron said, "Three different families have taken her and returned her; that no one could keep or do anything with her."

They had tried in vain to break her of untruthful and uncleanly ways. My friend thought her bad personal habits might be the result of disease, and medical examination proved this to be the case. When she decided to take the child they refused the necessary papers for adoption, so positive were they that she would be returned. Many years have passed since the child was taken to my friend's motherly home and motherly heart, during which she has improved wonderfully. The story of her trials



and triumphs with this little one, perhaps more diseased than depraved, would be an interesting one. Not knowing her exact age, she called the day of her adoption her birthday, and celebrates it as such, and the little one enjoyed these annual festivities more than most children.

She seemed full of life, joy and gratitude all the time, health and contentment bubbling over in many pleasing ways. Such children seem to appreciate home and love it more than those who have always had one. Happiness is with children as with us, only relative, measured by contrast in condition. My friend had merely given "little Mamie" a chance, and she came into the sunlight herself.

As years passed on, one needy child after another was gathered into her home, until they numbered seven. All have grown up to be good men and women, except one "bad boy," whom she found to be beyond her control. This "black sheep in the flock" was passed on to a reform school for bad boys. The prompt and wise way in which she disposed of him was as admirable as her success with the six retained. She "picked him up" from the street, but did not turn him back there, but by a legal process placed him in the best place she knew for those of his class. "Make a child do every day as you wish it to do always, as it costs so much more to unlearn than to learn aright," is her motto,

The greater the defects of natural character, and the worse the associations have been, the greater need for a judicious training. It is but justice to such. Yes, my



---

friend is right; justice and mercy cry out in behalf of those who have a bad inheritance and received a bad training. Many a modern saint says: "If I take a child I must be sure it is of good parentage." God so loved the world that He sent His only Son to us, because our fathers had sinned, and we children were doing so yet more and more. Jesus says, "As the Father sent Me into the world, even so send I you into the world to save sinners"—to save from sinning. Some say, "I will never take a child who has any parents or poor relatives hanging around." Well, "poor relations" are often inconvenient, but most of us have plenty of them, more or less remote, and we had better not be ashamed of them here, lest by and by, when He who alone can honor us, shall say, "I know you not." I am always sorry when foster parents try to conceal the ancestry of a child, and pass it off as their own, as if there could be any foundation for family love and peace better than truth. These concealed facts often come to the light when least expected, and in a way peculiarly trying.

Of course all Christians are ready for the work left them by the Savior; but many are very particular about the part they take in it. They want to be quite certain it will be respectable, and will prove a success, before they venture to take hold of it.

When canvassing the Chemung Valley many years ago to find suitable homes for four little orphan girls, I was often pleased, often pained, by what I then learned of



charity. Some were quite ready to take a little girl, indeed wanted one, if she could "work enough to pay her way." To this query the reply was: "That depends upon when you want your pay. 'He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord.' We want the foster parents of these girls to be ready to wait until the resurrection of the just for their recompense, though we hope that their little hands will be so helpful, and their hearts so grateful, as to repay something each day."

Others did not mind about their help, but wanted a lovable, promising child; one that would be a charming little comfort in a childless home; could not think of taking any other. Little, thought I, like "Him who first loved us, and gave Himself for us." But one noble-hearted Christian brother, when asked which one he would be willing to take, replied, "The one for whom you find it most difficult to secure a good home." Yes, some are ready for anything our Father wants done in this world, whether it is washing feet or washing faces; feeding the hungry or clothing the destitute; instructing the ignorant or giving homes to the homeless.

The reason why so many "stand all the day idle," is that they wait for just the kind of work they fancy would suit them, or for the assurance that they shall have the means to carry it on. Had the widow waited to see the barrel and the cruse filled before she made the cake for the prophet, I doubt if he would ever have been fed at her hands.



---

Strength increases, means multiply, ways open, as soon as we turn to the right work in the right way. A young lady of fine susceptibilities came under our care, with heart aching from an early sorrow, with stomach impaired by much sewing, and brain excitable from much reading of fiction to help her forget her own desolation. Being without means, she was cared for in the institution, doing what she could, and improving her leisure in physiological reading. From thence she "worked her way" to the medical profession, became a successful physician, supported her aged parents many years, and adopted a motherless child, who has grown to charming girlhood. This woman, delicate and dependent as she was twenty years ago, is now the wise counsellor for many, rich and poor, in the city where she resides. Those disciplined by poverty and early trials are usually best prepared to bear the labors and perplexities incident to the toils of a physician's life; still, some can and do bear their burdens well without this early chastisement.

A professional friend who was blessed with good health and fine educational advantages, entered upon her medical work at about twenty, and now, at thirty, she stands at the head of an infirmary for women, arranged and carried on in accordance with her own plans, with a family corner for three orphans, aged six, eight and ten years. The oldest, bearing the significant name of Harry, was a terror to matrons and maids at the asylum where she found him; but under her supervision he has shown himself amenable



to moral means, giving her, on the whole, more care and comfort than either of the others. Sammy is not so brilliant, but is more reliable; while little Lillie was indeed a frail flower, not able to walk until three years old, but now at six showing what a loving, hygienic home will do for those who have a sad inheritance—a sick body.

“But,” I seem to hear some saying, “the samples of success you have given are of those well adapted to a profession which pays better than woman’s ordinary work.” True; then comes the question, what can *we*, who are worn with teaching and with stitching, until we are as poor in health as in purse, do for the destitute? Well, let us see what some such *are* doing.

A widow and three daughters have lived for twenty years in a thriving town in Central New York. The eldest sister, always an invalid, has, after years of failing sight, become hopelessly blind, so the two younger girls have been “the main stay” of the family. Teaching, sewing and some kinds of ornamental work are their only resources, and still they found a place in their home and hearts for a friendless, penniless orphan girl, taking her at fourteen months of age and meeting all her necessities, till now she has reached her fourteenth year, and by her bright, loving ways gives life and cheer to their family circle. More than this, an invalid friend seeing how well the maidens managed the girl of their adoption, chose one of them to administer on her estate, and as guardian for her only son. So a boy of eight has been added to the

.



circle, whose training and education she is superintending. Now, these young women had by inheritance, diseased constitutions, and their health and strength are due more to good care and a good spirit than any other cause. If they can keep up a home for a widowed mother, a blind sister, rear one child without means and take the responsible care of another with means, those, who have inherited a good constitution, and had the advantages of a good education, ought to do something beside get sick in the effort to keep their social standing.

Our plans for doing good often fail because we do not "covet earnestly the best gifts," but rather the showy ones, like the poor child who wanted a parasol for a Christmas present. I remember well the cold December day, when a colored girl, dirty and ragged, came to the house for "cold pieces." A friend of mine, who was eminently the friend of colored people, seeing her, gave a cheery "good morning," wished her "a merry Christmas," and asked what she would like best for a present; what of all things she could think of would make her most happy? After a few moments' thought, she replied, "A parasol!" My friend gave her one, and the dark, dirty face beamed with delight; for a time, at least, she forgot that she was cold, hungry, dirty and shabby. Now, when this friend inquired what she wanted for a Christmas present, she supposed she would ask something suited to the season, to her destitute condition, and might as well have had a cloak as a parasol. Many of us,



in our asking and effort, make a similar mistake. We plan and pray for that which is about like a parasol for Christmas, and so find ourselves short of ways and means for good doing.

Heaven and earth have inexhaustible resources which open when faith is kept alive by works. Then finite friends, guided by the Infinite Father, furnish us with help, and further our plans beyond what we had dared to hope.



## XII.

### The Effects of Tight Corsets and Dressing on Physical Perfection.

LADIES: I am asked for a letter on the evil consequences of corsets and tight dresses. To this request I am moved to respond.

The writer says: "My connection with a girls' school brings before me the startling fact that this pernicious habit of tight dressing is not decreasing." If so, the old adage is no longer true, that every generation grows weaker and wiser; but weaker and more foolish. After forty years of constant watching of womanhood at all ages I have come to the conclusion that there is no one thing so sure to make them weak as tight dresses. Girdle a tree and you lessen the depth of the roots and the height to which the branches will attain, the beauty of the foliage and the quality of the fruit. So, too, girdle a girl too tightly and you lessen her hold on earth and her growth toward heaven. Every grace will be diminished thereby. The writer above mentioned says: "The combined effort of all who see the evil of tight dressing is necessary to combat it." This is true because tight dressing seems to



squeeze out all "common sense," all physiological and Christian sense, so that you cannot make the victim of this inquisition either see or feel that it is wrong to sin against the body. I trust this class are not past praying for, but they almost seem to be past preaching to with hope of profit. Nevertheless, as I have faith in truth, I have kept talking against tight dressing, and expect to hold to my theme still, if I don't get so disgusted with the wickedness of women upon this point as to become dumb from contempt. I still have faith in the truth, and believe that, like good seed, it should be sown broadcast, knowing that some will fall on good ground. But women compressed by corsets have a soil too shallow to support good seed; they are like wayside hearers. During these many years of sowing I have found some good ground—have found a few who had ears to hear and hearts to understand. These have kept me in courage to hold on to the work. Among this class I number with great pleasure many earnest Christian girls, who longed for mind and strength with which to do the Master's work. Such were not in bondage to the Prince of this world, and felt that their bodies and spirits were the Lord's, and should be made as perfect as possible.

Others have suffered in the flesh so much that they are ready to cease from sin and respond to any suggestions which will lessen the number and severity of their infirmities. But many of our invalids are so wedded to their small waists that they will not give up tight dressing, even



if a cure is to be had in no other way. Many have been under pressure of this kind so long that they cannot realize it does harm; they feel very badly when corsets are removed; "it seems," they say, "as if we should fall to pieces."

The tight bands in early babyhood begin the work of compressing the chest, bringing the floating ribs towards each other, while the bones are soft and pliable. This is continued through the growing age so that the waist of the American lady and the foot of the Chinese woman are formed or deformed by the same heathenish process. Indeed, so accustomed are many to depend upon the dress for support that they cannot sit erect without it, and having always been compressed, take it as a matter of course they must be, and seem not to have the least idea that their manifold infirmities are induced by it.

So much has been said against tight dressing for the last one hundred years that every one knows that it is wrong just as well as one knows that sinning is wrong, but no one believes she dresses too tightly. I have been mother confessor for all manner of sins against the flesh for many years, and have met but few who confessed that they had ever dressed tightly. While ladies are proud of a small waist they regard it as an insult to be accused of making one. The question is not "Is it *wrong* to compress the chest?" for to find any one who approves of tight dressing would be more difficult than to find a needle in a hay mow. Nevertheless, there *are* plenty of them, all the way from



the grand ladies at the President's levee to the poor serving maid seeking a place.

Now to the question! When is a dress too tight? Whenever one cannot fill the lungs to the utmost without being hindered in the least by bands of any kind. The rule is very simple. When a dress is being fitted or belts are being measured, take in a full inspiration, or a long breath, and then one is ready for measurement. Many ladies have the waist ample, but wear the skirt bands and belts so tight as to compress the chest at the most compressible point, in the region of the floating ribs. Stricture here impairs the healthful action of not only the organs in that section, but of all those lying above or below the ligature.

If the bottom of the waist is snugly bound, the diaphragm is limited in its action, hence the lower portion of the lungs is not fully inflated. The stomach and liver lack proper play-room and motion, and with both digestion and respiration impeded there is no power to maintain health in any part of the body. The system not only lacks oxygen, but the lower part of the lungs from being long unused loses its healthful action, and so is laid the foundation for consumption.

The stomach and liver lack both the room and the exercise needed to perform their functions well, and this invites indigestion and constipation.

The whole twenty-four feet of alimentary canal is also kept too quiet, being deprived of the movements which a full, free respiration imparts. Breathing should move all



the viscera from the thorax to the pelvis. In most women genteelly dressed, there is but slight motion, save in the upper portion of the lungs. The want of action in the abdominal muscles weakens them so that they cannot support the internal organs. *Just here* lies the foundation of a long list of feminine infirmities, bearing the disagreeable title of "female diseases," about which I will not speak here.

Why are corsets worn? To improve the figure, many say. And yet the finest formed women I have ever seen wore no corsets, but were supposed to do so because of their fine busts. In reference to these, I have been asked what corsets or shoulder braces they wore, the inquirer wishing to secure the same, because their chests were perfect in contour. Now, the peculiarity with those young ladies was that they had never worn corsets or been compressed, padded or braced, but had dressed loosely and taken gymnastic training, which is so useful in improving the bust.

Those who wish for a fine figure should not encase it in whalebone, so as to limit muscular motion, but encourage the free development of every organ within and without by appropriate training. Take in the most air possible, so as to make lungs full and free; throw shoulders back so as to secure the chest broad and erect; give free play to all the muscles; so that they may grow strong and support the body without artificial aid.

Some say they wear corsets and braces because they do



not feel able to stand or sit erect without them. They can overcome this debility by laying aside artificial support and taking exercise and rest alternately, as strength will allow. Others say they wear them to support their skirts, but these allow the support and the supported to rest on the organs below. All clothing should be suspended from the shoulders and not rest upon stomach or bowels. Others still, speak of skirt bands and belts giving an uncomfortable sense of pressure, or, as they say, "cut in" when they are without corsets. If so, they are too tight or not properly adjusted. They should be buttoned to a waist, so that all the clothing may be suspended from broad and strong shoulders, made to carry all necessary burdens.

Every woman should have the good sense to dress warmly, with the least weight possible. Long skirts bring weight, often unsupported, and give very little warmth. The weariness, the lack of ability to walk, to go up and down stairs, the troubles induced thereby, are owing largely to these two faults in dressing—compression in the region of the floating ribs, and pressure on the viscera below, for want of supported skirts. For more than forty years I have found that union under suits afford an equal warmth all over the body, and that I can dispense with heavy skirts, the material of the former being adapted to the weather.

The good Father has not made us so imperfectly that we cannot climb hills or go up stairs, unless we are really



---

sick, or have greatly sinned against the bodies He has given us. I am ashamed of women when they say that stairs at boarding schools are killing our young ladies. Why, they ought to be able to go up all the stairs and all the hills in their region, if they have no other exercise! If they have not muscle enough to do this, they will not long have mind enough for profitable study.

When I see young ladies with faces sickly, sallow, spiritless, and disfigured by eruptions, I can read compressions at the bottom of the waist, imperfect action of the stomach and liver, and a long list of other infirmities which no medicine can cure. The blood being imperfectly oxygenized, and waste matter imperfectly eliminated, the skin is burdened with business not its own. There is no cure for a bad skin while the bowels are constipated, and no way to set them right but to set the liver free and give it abundant exercise, which it can never get so long as there are corsets or close bands confining the lower ribs. Along with all these, fill the lungs, beat the chest and liver, walk briskly (if up hill all the better), take light gymnastics, or better, active domestic work, and in three months you will be several inches larger at the bottom of the waist. We must let young ladies remain sallow and pimply in face and depressed in spirit, if they prefer these blemishes rather than waists of normal size.

Conscience only can correct this curse of womanhood, compression of the chest. Ladies have their Christian aspirations. They want to be good and do good, only



they fail to realize that God giveth them the body, and for its right use they are accountable. They forget that the good Father has given us instinct, sensation and reason, by which we may know how to care for our physical frames; but we fail to listen to this voice which is ever ready to guide us concerning our bodily needs.



## XIII.

### Some Faults of School Girls.

LADIES: We have, most of us, had at some time enthusiastic interest in the establishment of schools for the education of our daughters. Now that the facilities to this end are multiplied in every direction, the anxious inquiry comes from all quarters, Will they endure educating? Are they not made of too fine material to stand the strain of close and constant study? May be so; may be not. Let us face the facts.

We find much invalidism begotten at boarding-schools, which, like most habits formed early, is likely to be permanent. Now, are boarding schools to blame? Can it be that institutions built at so much cost, baptized with so many prayers and so much self-denial, and sustained by the enthusiasm of Christian teachers, are in the end to burden our land with invalid daughters? Sentimental mothers and scientific physicians frequently blame boarding-schools. Are they to blame? If so, where or rather how? Is it the teachers, those worn and weary ones who do more mental work, and bear more care and perplexity than any other class of persons for the same pay? Are



they to blame when their pupils turn out sickly, sentimental and "shiftless?" Sometimes, but *not* always.

In many cases they have seen the mental or physical habits which were leading to invalidism, and have tried to correct them, often in vain. In all large gatherings of young ladies will be found many who will not conform to hygienic laws. They will eat the wrong things at the wrong time. They will sit up when they ought to be asleep, and dress with no reference to bodily conditions. Now, when and where should young ladies learn what to eat, when to sleep and how to dress? Surely at home, and that *before* their college course, *not after* it. During the home life of growing girls, such intelligent obedience to the laws of health should be formed, that when they go to boarding-schools they will not have to be watched, to see that they do not eat cake, candies, chalk and slate pencils between meals, or to have their teachers worried in the vain effort to see that they do not slowly but surely injure themselves by steady pressure at the bottom of the waist. If any of them do commit suicide in this way, I should not say that their teachers were to blame. They are set to look after their mental culture, and when good regulations for the institution have been made, such as will be conducive to health, they have done about all they can do.

I speak plainly, because when mothers bring me their daughters diseased and depressed they blame boarding-schools. Sometimes, on inquiry, I find that the young



---

Miss never had any good habits, and was sent to school to learn them. A few seemed to be all right at home, but all wrong when free from parental restraint. That is, they had no "root" in themselves, and so when away from their mothers, were molded more by some wayward companions than by their teachers. Young ladies need advice in matters which pertain to health, head and heart; and if they seek it of those who are set over them, they will usually get good guidance. But too often they take to those of their own age, and so intensify their faults instead of correcting them.

From my observation, more young ladies are made ill by hard habits than by hard study. It sounds all very proper and polished when the mother tells me that her daughter is very frail; that she came home from boarding-school very nervous and sensitive; that she has consulted the best physicians, but still she remains feeble, and fears she is going into a decline. All this seems as if the dear girl was ill from hard study; but on close inquiry I conclude it is not excess of science, but lack of common sense in the conduct of her physical habits which has made her sick.

If my little office could talk, it would tell some strange stories about girls who have ruined their health by hard study. For instance: Here is a nervous, restless, sleepless invalid who, at twenty, looks older than she ought at thirty. She was once a rosy, happy country girl. A few years ago she went to a boarding-school, and took to study



and stays. Which did the most harm, the books or the braces, what was put into her brain, or what was put out of place in her body?

For want of room for the digestive organs, and for lack of exercise the young miss loses her relish for plain bread, meat and vegetables, such as are set before her, and begins to complain of "poor fare." She feels famished, and longs for something she can eat, and writes home that she is half starved. Then comes a box of "goodies," which brings neither good health nor good scholarship, but a series of sick headaches. In lack of stores from home she will nibble pencils, or buy sweetmeats with her pin money. So our young lady puts cakes and candies, pickles and preserves into her stomach, and then tries to get into her head ancient and modern languages, the higher mathematics, natural science, mental and moral philosophy, and the whole round of ornamental branches beside! Now, no human digestion can make a good body or a good brain out of such material. We have had as patients many a nervous, irritable dyspeptic, who, after all the advantages she had enjoyed, all the money that had been expended on her, ought to have been a bright, loving, intelligent, vigorous young lady, but was just the reverse.

A friend of mine who is the lady superior of a large boarding-school, told me she noticed that there was more headache from stomach disturbance than usual, and was wondering what could be the cause, when she learned that a grocery had recently been opened within the limits



---

allowed the young ladies for their daily walks, and that the pupils had been patronizing it extensively.

Many young ladies go through a four years' course of study, or "make believe" they do so, merely because it is genteel. They have little interest in their studies, and know little of the large field over which they have traveled; they gain from their school life more vanity and self-complaisance than anything else. They imagine they are well educated because they are graduates, and have a proportionate contempt for common folks as well as common duties. Such ought not to waste their time and wear out their teachers by a school course, because after its close they have less health, less business ability, and are usually less acceptable, socially, than before.

Now that we are once in earnest to educate girls, we are likely to be over anxious on this point. If a daughter lacks either health or the taste for close study, make her school course short, otherwise you spoil what might have been a good housekeeper, and get in return a poor scholar, a very bad bargain, for good housekeepers are most needed. I know mothers sometimes banish their girls to boarding-schools and convents to keep them away from beaux and bad influences. Well, I am only sorry for those mothers who can find no other way for their daughters to pass profitably their spring-time of life, which flies only too rapidly.

But some young ladies become ill during their school days, who have never been to boarding-school. Such can-



not complain of poor food, of cold rooms, of close confinement, of climbing stairs, etc. Many of these had such shockingly bad home habits that we only wonder how they held out so long.

It is not strange that their lessons seemed long and hard, when their minds were distracted by social gaiety, and exhausted by late hours. If our girls are to go through a course of study profitably, they must, during these years, keep clear for the most part of beaux and balls, of calls and company.

For years it has been an increasing wonder with me, how some young ladies come to be so well educated with so little help, and that others know so little when there has been so much done for them. Many give more time to story reading than to study. Being fond of fiction they have little relish for facts. It is like turning from sweetmeats to bread and beef. There must be an *interim* to enjoy the latter. Besides the lack of interest, the strength which is needed for scientific investigation is expended on the emotional, by the reading of exciting romance. Feeling, as well as thinking, exhausts nervous power. Vivid descriptions of love and marriage awaken, in impressible girls, thoughts and desires unsuited to student life. And poor health and poor scholarship are the result.

I hear some mother say, "My invalid daughter does not belong to any of the foregoing classes of sinners," Then she may be among those of whom I shall write in the next letter.



---

While writing this I have had in mind the many who have come under my care with health needlessly impaired during their school days. But I am glad to have also known many young women, with delicate constitutions and limited means, who have been able to do good work, not only at college but after graduation, because of correct hygienic habits.



## XIV.

### Over Intellectual Development of School Girls.

LADIES: In my last letter I talked of those students who were sick, not from hard study but from injudicious habits. Now I will consider those real students who sometimes lose their health, and some of the reasons for it.

Is it true that mental cultivation must be at the expense of physical health? Do the mind and body run in opposition to each other, so that what is for the advantage of one injures the other? I think not. I believe rational study should improve the health, often does.

Mind and body, so dependent upon each other for their healthful action, ought not to harm but to help one another by cultivation. Statistics show good health and great age among scientific men, where their habits are normal. But how is it that so many good scholars sicken during school life? Are there diseases incident to school days, like teething to babyhood, and measles to childhood?

First, remember we have a three-fold nature, which, like a three-fold cord, is not easily broken when each strand is duly developed, that is our physical, mental and spiritual organizations. Each should strengthen the other. The first fault of those desiring a good education, is that of making too much of the mind and forgetting the body



---

and spirit. Some of the most unlovely characters I have ever seen among my invalid band are those who have been brilliant scholars, but reckless of their health and of their spiritual nature. When infirmity comes, so that they are cut off from books, they are restless, irritable, and feel as if there was nothing to live for.

Intellectual pride is so prominent in them that they have a sort of contempt for everything but book learning. Such the good Father often blesses by first blighting their favorite plans.

Our spiritual natures should steady and strengthen us in our intellectual pursuits. This blessed element should save us from over-pride or pain because of our intellectual shortcomings.

Let us have a good spirit, first; then a good body, and, finally, cultivate our minds all we can. Bible reading and Sunday services are blessed rests for mind and body, while they help in heart culture. Scholarly skepticism is often found when the body is out of tune. Irreverence for physical and spiritual laws frequently co-exist. The real element of a healthful spiritual life and growth resides in the reverent listening to the Voice from above, whether it comes through natural revelation or from the good spirit in our hearts. Bodily health comes through obedience to the laws written in our physical frames. But many forget this fact until the penalty comes in the way of pain.

I sometimes think that scholarly pride would like to



build a tower of its own intellectual attainments, reaching unto heaven; but a confusion of the head would cut short the work, like the confounding of tongues at the building of the Tower of Babel. This would be well. We need something besides clear, cold intellect to bless the world.

If you are striving to ascend the hill of science because you see the temple of fame at the top, you will probably never reach it, for you will violate so many of the laws of your physical and spiritual being that your body will fail and faint by the way. All this is ordered in mercy, because we are not in the way of the best blessings when we break any, even the "least, of the commandments" which pertain to either body or spirit.

One of the faults of good scholars consists in studying too much early in life—an error of their parents or teachers, perhaps. Brain and nerves improve in power by age. The best balanced minds are not brilliant early in life.

The next fault is trying to do too much in a short time. Our girls struggle to finish their school course at eighteen or twenty, just when they are entering on the years for most profitable study. It is true we may memorize most easily in our early age, but judgment and reason must have years to mature.

The courses of study planned at the best schools would be good, if the students had time, taste and strength to thoroughly comprehend them; but most of them require a mature mind in a mature body to master. A smattering



---

may be memorized, but a clear, abiding sense cannot be gained early. The subjects are not half comprehended and are, therefore, soon forgotten.

The result of close confinement to books when young, is that the body is impoverished by lack of fresh air, imperfect nutrition, and over-tasked by mental work, so that mind and muscle usually fail together. Sometimes the body asserts its rights and keeps in good condition, while the mind fails, and so good health and poor scholarship are the result. We have all wondered why bright girls sometimes turn out dull and uninteresting before they are twenty years old. I have seen those bearing the mark of being dwarfed in mind just as distinctly as others were in body. We can see that at twelve, fifteen or eighteen years of age they cease to grow intellectually and sometimes morally.

When in a public school one day, I observed a little girl on tip-toe, doing difficult examples on the board very easily. While talking to the principal of the school, I said to him that a child with such a small calf of the leg ought never to do such head-work, and inquired if he knew her family. He said that her older sisters had been in his school, and that, like her, they were bright and promised wonders at first, but all grew dull and fell below mediocrity after a few years.

Now these precocious ones should be held in check mentally, and encouraged to develop their bodies.

Youthful brains overtaxed not only tire out, but become



so used up that they never recover. Among the latter class, I have in mind one of great promise in childhood. She was the pride and joy of her parents. They took great pleasure in giving her the best educational advantages, and she went on wonderfully well for a while; then she grew at times strange and dreamy, which condition has increased, till now she cannot be trusted with even the simplest business responsibilities, and her conversation is confined to the most ordinary round of topics. She now nears her thirtieth year, and though in good health and of fair size, yet possesses less ability in any direction than most children at ten.

Cases of mental or physical failure from too close study early in life are not peculiar to girls. Our boys are less liable to break, for several reasons. They do not usually develop in mind as early, hence they endure study better. Then, too, they take more time and do not feel, like girls, as if their gentility, their social position, depended upon graduating before they are twenty. Besides this, their habits of dress are more healthful, and the proprieties of life does not debar them from active out-door exercise, as it does many young ladies, yet they frequently break down.

Sometimes there is a seeming divorce of the physical and intellectual powers, the former going on well, the latter declining. In others, the mental life burns more and more brilliantly, till the body dies or falls into incurable decay. Our excellent educational advantages furnish specimens of both classes, but most of the latter. How often we hear



that a last year's graduate, or a first head scholar, has fallen sick of some ordinary acute disease, which proves fatal, simply because the long course of study has so enfeebled her system that it had little power to resist disease, or recuperative force to rally from slight illness. Perhaps a severe cold sends her off with "quick consumption," and every one wonders that she should go in such a way. Many more finish their school course with just enough life to live, but not enough to do anything with what they have learned, and so, instead of bearing burdens, they must be held up the rest of their days. They have neither mental nor physical force enough to grapple with life's problems, and as for the moral, it is expended more in the ideal or emotional, than in any distinct grappling with the many needs of this "sin-stricken world."

How often do we hear persons say that, "My wrist since lifting too much," or, "My ankle since that unlucky fall," or "My back from over-work is very weak."

We can say the same of many a mind: "It was over-taxed and never recovered. The introduction of gymnastics, good and graceful as they are in the way of physical culture, must fall short of their full usefulness when the pupils are pressed too hard in study. "We cannot eat our cake and keep it, too." We cannot use up our life-force in mental work and have it for muscular labor. Students over-burdened with book work seem languid, lazy, even, because the nerve force, the electricity, or the what-



ever it is which goes from brain to body, is so exhausted that freedom in muscular action is lacking. If we wish students to enter with spirit and profit into physical exercise, they must not be exhausted by study, for exercise does not create nerve power; it expends it in such a way as to improve appetite, digestion and assimilation. Many of our schools for young ladies are recognizing this need for exercise, and are making generous provision for it, but it falls short of being a perfect remedy, because the course of study is so extended that it leaves neither time nor strength for muscular training. Our growing girls can't learn everything, and maintain perfect health.

Piano playing seems to exhaust nervous energy very rapidly, in proportion to the time spent. Dimness of vision, bad sensations in the head, numbness of the fingers, all indicate exhaustion. Sometimes partial paralysis, involuntary action of the muscles, called chorea, or St. Vitus's dance, are the result of too much practice at the piano by girls from twelve to twenty years of age. When confined to it earlier than this, the body fails to develop, and the little girl is smaller than she should be—has a flat chest, an undeveloped form, and enters her teens looking like a little old woman, poor in flesh and sallow. Such withered specimens need baths, bread and beef, mental rest and moderate exercise out of doors. Some of the most forlorn among young ladies at school are those who are devoting themselves exclusively to music and painting, to the neglect of all healthful exercise. The delicate senses



---

are so taxed as to exhaust the nervous system rapidly, and the poor girls are wretched without any idea of the cause. Poetic temperaments are more delicate in their organization, and hence more liable to invalidism. Those who devote their time to scientific studies keep in better health than those of a more literary bent of mind. Astronomy, geology, botany, chemistry, bring one more in contact with nature, and are a safe and sure tonic for body and spirit. Chronic invalids are frequently much improved in health and cheer by devoting a portion of each day to some of the natural sciences for which they have a preference. Especially is this true when their infirmities have been induced by exciting reading, too intense pursuit of pleasure or profit, or by some severe social sorrow. Then the contemplation of Nature's beauties will soothe, while the study of her laws will steady and strengthen her votaries.



## XV.

### Hygiene of the Eyes.

LADIES: Weakness and imperfection of vision is becoming very common among students. The normal eye is capable of wonderful adaptation to our needs. It can see near and far with equal facility; but, like other organs, if used too exclusively in one kind of work it loses its power of adaptation. If kept too constantly on the printed page, the range of vision becomes impaired, and near-sightedness is the result. The same is true if the type is too small.

Small children injure their eyes by an unnecessary amount of detail in their lessons, which requires a too close and a too constant use of them. For instance: A No. 5 Geography, for use in our schools, is excellent for reference when reading; but it is a waste of eyesight for children to hunt out and memorize the location of towns, to trace the ways of rivers, and many other things which will soon be forgotten.

Dr. H. W. Williams says: "One of the first rules laid down by a teacher to his pupils should be *not* to keep their eyes fixed upon their books. Apart from the probable injury to the eye itself by too close application, I am satisfied that lessons, especially those requiring thought,



cannot be as well committed to memory when the eyes are fixed upon the page, as if they are permitted to wander. The eyes must, of course, look at the book often and long enough to take in the idea; but if they are too steadily kept there, the perceptive power seems to occupy itself with the visible objects to an extent which is unfavorable to other mental processes."

A distinguished engraver once said to me: "I know how to make a face think." He explained that the secret lay in giving a certain expression to the eyes by causing their axes to have a very slight divergence from each other. This corresponds with my observation, and the form of face during moments of thoughtfulness is exactly opposite from that taken by the eyes when looking at a book.

We have long known that the eye may be injured by looking at the sun, in the case of an eclipse, without the aid of smoked glass, the perceptive power being impaired by excess of light. It may also be injured by looking at small objects with too little light, as, for instance, reading fine print by moonlight. But we are yet to fully realize how often the eyes are injured by strong gaslight. It may be too intense, or have a flicker which is particularly trying, unless there is a shade over it. Those accustomed to gas or kerosene find it difficult to see by candles or any light less brilliant; but those who have habitually used candles, cannot only see well with less light; their eyes last longer without the aid of glasses than do the eyes of



those who have rejoiced in the flood of light which the gas burner gives out.

When the optic nerve has become supersensitive to light, a good candle is a great relief. Of course it will not make the room as bright as gas or kerosene will, but it will furnish light enough for reading, and a soft light which will be less trying to the eye.

Twilight is very grateful to the eye if we rest in it; if we read or sew in the transition stage from day to night, or night to day, it is very trying to one's sight. The use of artificial light at early morning is very bad for the eyes, much more so than at evening. To go from sound sleep and deep darkness into the light of gas, especially for study and piano practice, is not well for our eyes.

Within a few weeks several young ladies have consulted me in regard to their eyes, where they have been seriously and permanently injured by piano practice by gaslight at early morning. As music cannot be changed to suit the exact focus of the eye, it is more likely to become injured in this way than most other ways.

The study of any foreign language is much more trying to the eye than the reading of one's own. The words lack the familiar appearance, and hence are not so easily recognized. The searching for words in the dictionary is particularly hard on the eyes, and if the alphabet be dissimilar to our own it is still more trying. Those who have weak eyes, and those who don't want to have them become so, should avoid piano practice and lexicons by artificial light,



---

and especially in the early morning hours. Those whose eyes are in any degree sensitive, will accomplish more in a given time, by studying only by daylight, and during the evening avoiding gaslight, and giving themselves up to plain work or cheerful conversation; for deep study and close thought, even if the eye is not used, tend to bring the blood to the head, and make the eye worse if it be inflamed or painful. Embroidery, or even any kind of worsted work, is bad, as bright colors tax sensitive eyes seriously.

Reading from a moving page is also trying to the eyes. Many persons who have traveled much tell me that they have permanently impaired their sight by reading on the cars. Young ladies who go out to walk with a book cheat themselves in two ways: The exercise they get is not efficient, and the moving page, and the brighter light than that within doors, injure the eye. To make bodily exercise profitable, the brain must rest from books, and send its nervous and circulatory force into the muscular system.

Long lessons in Latin are often taken to make up arrears, or in order to be ready for an advanced class, and by this course many eyes have been impaired for life.

English literature, in which almost all young ladies are greatly interested, causes many to be tempted to over-study. There is so much that can be read, that they want to read, to be ready for the next recitation, that the hours for sleep are too often curtailed. The preparation for the class essay is a great stimulus, for as the predecessor fur-



nished one that was excellent, the successor wants a better. Young ladies should remember that they cannot complete English literature at college, and it would be better to save their eyes so that they may continue it in later years. It is comparatively little that they can do in this department, in connection with so many other studies, without neglecting some duties and impairing their health. Indeed, they should regard their four years' course as a period of incubation, expecting to come out, not with dim eyes and distracted nerves, but in robust health, and in full possession of all their powers, so that they can keep growing morally and intellectually as long as they live.

Students having weak eyes ought to room alone, that they may regulate the light to suit their own needs. Strong light in the room, even though the eye is kept shaded or closed, tires and gives pain when the optic nerve is sensitive. Such need to sleep all they can; and if they retire before their school-mates they are often kept awake, and the presence of the light wearies even the closed eyes.



## XVI.

### Ready for What?

**LADIES:** A young girl in her school career said, "One year more, and I graduate; another year at a seminary in the city to finish; next, I will read and travel a year, and then I shall be ready."

"Ready for what?" asked my friend whom she was addressing. The young miss looked puzzled a moment, and then replied blushing, "To get married, I suppose."

In a previous letter we have gone over some of the sins and infirmities incident to the school life of young ladies, and will consider "What next?" It may be to get married, it may be not. As I do not wish to treat young ladies like charming vases placed in shop windows, ready to be selected and set in private homes, therefore the question, "Ready for What?" is of earnest practical import. Many beautiful girls are earnest souls who, when the freshness of freedom from school routine is over and the first charm of the coming out is past, look around longingly for something to live for beyond the diversions of the passing days. Some rush into gaieties for which they have no relish, or worse, into married life, which they



did not really want, merely because there is in them a fund of life-force which must be expended some how, or because they want a new sensation.

What shall a genteel lady do, after her graduation, to save her body and soul? Both will go to ruin if not usefully employed. A house with a good tenant lasts longer than an empty one.

We must all work out our own salvation by working for the world, even if our friends have funds enough to feed and clothe us. By this, we do not mean that growing girls or graduated girls should be burdened with business heavy for heart or hand. They should have time to bud and blossom, bask in the sunshine, develop and enjoy their beauties, or, like colts and lambs, frisk with the delight of existence.

Many girls are hopelessly broken by work of body and brain too heavy for them, before they are sufficiently consolidated to endure it well. Sometimes a keen sense of religious responsibility goads them on to undertake more than they can bear. The growing Christian sense of ripening girlhood needs to be held back, rather than to be hurried forward.

But what shall one do whose spiritual life or physical needs have not yet put her under pressure of any sort, and who stands, diploma in hand, ready for what?

If any of you have pressed your mental powers so hard, in order to graduate with honor, that the muscular system has lost its tone, then rest and recreate long enough to



---

restore it. Don't let this feebleness settle into a chronic weariness, so that General Debility shall be your general for the rest of life. Remember that the lassitude which often ensues after a long course of study is because the forces of the system have been exhausted through the brain, and that the muscles are weak because the electrical force, or the nerve fluid, has been so expended that there has been too little left to infuse them with vigor. So, first, vegetate. Take bodily exercise and let the brain rest. If you are so fortunate as to have a sensible mother, who lives in a simple way in a quiet house, she can help you into a practical knowledge of housekeeping, and back to good health at the same time.

Have you cold feet, pressure of blood to the head, loss of appetite, constipation? Domestic work, cheerfully done, is an excellent remedy for all these. Remember, cheerfully done. A bad spirit spoils every remedial means. You don't like it. Very probably; but you can learn to like it. To find the crown that lies beneath every cross, it must be shouldered and carried cheerfully, not shirked half the time, dragged the other half.

Return to the mother who has been so tenderly longing for you, not to be a pretty parlor ornament merely, or worse, a genteel invalid, but to share the duties which rest too heavily on the maternal head of the household; not only share them, but learn to shoulder them, and thus add length and strength to the days of one who has done so much for you. Grown-up daughters come on just when



the mother most needs help. As she nears her first half century she should have a season of leisure for rest and recuperation, so as to be ready for active service for years to come, with perhaps less beauty and more wisdom than characterized her earlier days. Every farmer recognizes this principle in reference to his favorite family horse, and so turns out the noble animal to pasture for a whole summer, saying, "It will pay in the end."

Human nature and horse nature are not unlike in this, and many do not live out half their days for want of this year of jubilee, like that appointed for the Jews, as may be read to advantage in the Bible.

Gentle, patient, devoted women, for lack of this release, often go beyond the rallying point, and die early or live on as invalids. Mothers are very frequently over-indulgent, and daughters more thoughtless than heartless, and both are debilitated—one by overwork, the other for lack of it.

As to home duties, let every young lady honor the estate in which God has placed her. Jesus went from the temple to Nazareth, and was subject to His parents, or, as we suppose, helped Joseph, His father, a carpenter. So when you leave your temple of knowledge and go to your home be subject to your mother, ready to help her, and as soon as possible give her rest from her labors for a time. If she keeps house and does her own work, you should soon be able to assume all her duties. If she has a great house, many servants, and a large social circle, then her position is still more trying, and she is in greater need of release.



---

Perhaps there is an invalid in the family, or wild girls, or wayward boys, or a backward scholar, who need bringing up for day and Sunday school who tax your mother sorely. If so, assume one after another of these responsibilities as fast as you are able, and she will breathe easier and sleep sounder for it.

She has turned her own life-current always for your comfort, and now she cannot ask you to sacrifice yourself for her, so you must do it without being asked; and when you have cheerfully assumed her duties, she will rejoice in the rest which a daughter gives.

Surely a young lady after a three or four years' course at school, should not come home more useless than she went away, more helpless than those of her own age who have not enjoyed these advantages. She should have patience enough to manage children, and character enough to control hired help. If she can't find a good domestic, she must make one out of raw material, for there is plenty of that everywhere. Every good mistress is able to control her own spirit and another's also.

I speak thus plainly, because there are some who seem to have lost all their health and common sense at school, if they ever had any.

But why do I make so much of a knowledge of domestic economy? Because it is the best basis for good business ability in other departments of labor. Physical strength and patient energy in disagreeable duties are thus developed.



When I talk to you about housekeeping, don't dream that I expect you will all soon have a house of your own to keep, or that you will always keep house for your mother. But I speak of it as your teachers did of mathematics and Latin. They have told you these studies are good foundation stones for a good education. So, also, is a thorough acquaintance with domestic duties.

So much for the hands of young graduates; now for the heads, which have been doing their best with the best of help these many years. Is the course of study finished? Are you to make no further attainments in science and literature, and only to be busy forgetting what you have learned?

I once lived in a neighborhood of Dutch Yankees, who made free use of the word "busy." When riding past the house of one of them, seeing a boy near the door, a friend asked, "Is your father within?" "Yes," answered the lad. "Ask him to come out," "He can't," was the answer. "Why not?" "'Cause," said the boy, "he is busy a-dying!"

So often girls emancipated from domestic work, are "busy a-dying." Their bad bodily habits invite debility and disease. Their bad mental habits make them dreamy and forgetful. How few after leaving school read novels to any purpose beyond seeing how the story turns out—a practice which is ruinous to the memory.

Well, what shall you read? First, read with the purpose of being intelligent in some one direction. Out of



the range of history and literature select what you like best, if you can. If not, what opportunity offers.

Now that books are so plenty on botany, chemistry, geology, conchology, astronomy, etc., there surely ought to be something between the heavens above and the earth beneath which will interest a well-educated young lady, so that she need not be driven for mental diversion to the wild fancies of story writers, who depend for their inspiration on the excitement of late hours and the exhilaration of tea, coffee, tobacco, brandy and opium.

When riding on the broadest lakes, the grandest rivers, amid scenery the finest that earth affords, you see some young ladies more interested in a new romance of unreal life than in all the wonders and beauties about them. Such travel seems to me a sad waste of time.

A friend of mine came from California around the Cape, for the benefit of her health—a six months' voyage. During the first few days after leaving San Francisco, there were many expressions of pleasure on the part of the ladies at the prospect of the long voyage. The captain said, on hearing them, "Yes, the ladies will dress up and keep bright and on deck for a few days, and then they will grow gloomy and say it is dull and stupid, and take to their berths and read novels for the rest of the way, and we shall have none of their company."

My friend, though a delicate invalid, determined that the prophecy should not hold true in her case. So she spent a large share of her time on deck, talking with the



captain as she had opportunity. He, finding in her an intelligent listener, took evident pleasure in instructing her in the art of navigation, saying it was rare to find a lady who knew anything about the ways of a ship at sea.

Before they reached New York the captain was sick, and she, with the mate, made the bearings and kept the records. You ask, perhaps, if she became a sailor on the high seas. No, she went to her Western home, and married the man who had been so patiently waiting for her to get well. Then you say, "What good did all this do her?" First, the voyage was more interesting to her, and so did her more good. A journey enjoyed benefits health unspeakably more than one merely endured. Beside this, the intelligence gained will always be a source of pleasure to her and to her many friends. Surely when three-fourths of the earth is ocean, and we are brought over the great waters to our desired haven, is it not of some use to know how it is done?

Not only sea captains, but men everywhere, from coal diggers to Congressmen, are ready to instruct young ladies in reference to their craft, if they lead off quietly with a few inquiries and then give appreciative attention to the replies. A good listener is the best of company. Our girls can glean a great amount of science and sense from fathers and brothers, by cultivating an acquaintance with their occupations, whatever they may be.

There is no handicraft that meets any human need but it is well to know about. Of course, no one can learn



everything, but only glean from what is within reach, and so do not grasp in vain for what is beyond it. But you say, What is the use of all this, when the chief occupation of women is housekeeping? First, there is strength and comfort in the knowing; second, "A stone fitted for the wall will not long lie in the road." Among many young ladies who have come in my way wanting work, I do not remember one for whom I could not find a good place and good pay, if there were anything she could do well.

But to the point. Is your father a lawyer? If so, let him select reading matter for you from his own library. Surely, if you have studied the higher mathematics, you ought to be bright enough to learn something of the laws of your State and nation, with a loving father as a teacher.

A few days ago I listened with great interest to the examination of a class of young ladies who had been studying civil government. They talked intelligently of State rights, of the power of the President, the Senate and House, the Wilmot Proviso, the Missouri Compromise, etc. Surely, these subjects are of more practical interest than heathen mythology, or the history of nations long extinct.

Is your father a clergyman? Then you can have the best of helps in sacred literature, and in turn help him in his work among his people, and in his study. I know a very interesting young lady, the daughter of an eminent clergyman, who for a few years has written all her father's sermons, and they were well written, too. The father had



in early life a nervous disorder which prevented his writing, so he would dictate while his wife wrote, and when the wife became ill, the grown-up daughter took her place. Though her school course was much less complete than she desired, in real mental culture she is in advance of most young women of her age. Of course, having written critically so many years, she is a good judge of books, sermons, lectures, etc.

If your father is a physician, then learn something of the human frame, its infirmities, and the modes of relief. At least have a general idea of his remedies and for what they are used.

I once asked a young lady, suffering severely from inflammation of the eyes, what had been done for them. "Well," she said, "I have tried almost everything, even horse liniment." "How is that?" I asked. "Why, I sent to our family physician for something to put on my eyes, and as the doctor was not in, his wife sent me what she supposed to be eye-water, but which I found afterward was liniment made for a neighbor's horse." In this instance an intelligent wife could have prevented much suffering.

Do not fancy that I want to make doctors, lawyers or divines of you all in a hurry. No, rejoice in your graduation, enjoy the springtime of life. I only wish to prompt you to sow the seed of good common sense; and science, so that when the dewy freshness of your spring flowers has faded, that your life may not be lacking any green



thing, but rather growing a richer harvest, less beautiful, perhaps, but more enduring.

As women advance in years, they usually want a home of their own. "Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home." I would advise all those who have no distinct home ties to which they are held by definite duties, to try to make a home for themselves. To work with an object in view stimulates energy, economy, and industry.

Do not understand me as wishing to discourage marriage, for "I would not if I could, and I could not if I would." But many never meet their "other half" in this world, and those who do may find it convenient to have a home for a husband to come to, or, rather, to go to when he fails to provide one himself.

Many years ago a young woman came to me, an orphan and an invalid, without means. Restored to health, a medical education made her self-supporting and able to support others. After serving as physican in an institution for many years, she went into private practice in a city where she bought a home. Late in life she married a college professor with half a dozen motherless children. After his death, she returned to her home, which had been rented meanwhile, brought the six children with her, resumed her practice, and has educated them all, and still has her home and their love to comfort her in her old age.

Another medical friend has adopted and brought up wisely and generously half a dozen children without the help of a husband.



A young lady long ago came under my care as an invalid, who asked money of her well-to-do brother to pay her bills, which he refused. Years after, when she was in successful medical practice in a large city, he failed in business and she took his wife and children to her home, making them welcome till he could again provide for them.

Mind, it is not necessary to be a doctor to make a home.

There are many remunerative occupations open by which women can earn money, if they do not spend too much on fancies and follies. I could cite several cases where daughters have by their own efforts provided homes for indigent parents, or for brothers who had been unfortunate in business.

Women can make a little money do a great deal of good or spend a great deal of money and do but little good.

The desire to do good "hoping no return," is what I call the motherly element. It exists in many a woman who has never honored a man by taking his name; and I am sorry to say also, is lacking in many a wife and mother. Single women possessing this quality may accomplish great good in public and private life.

Last of all, study and master the art of true living. Herbert Spencer tells us that we may find in it sources of culture not found in any other study, and with this culture that knowledge of how to conduct our physical lives now so greatly needed by us all.



## XVII.

### Medicine, Hygiene and Nursing as Professions for Women.

LADIES: The worthy father of a dozen children, when discussing the subject of family discipline, said, "I always let my children do pretty much as they are a mind to, if they don't do anything bad." His children gave credit to his peculiar method.

When so much is being said as to what women can or should do, we are inclined to settle the whole question as this father did: "Let them do pretty much as they are a mind to, if they don't do anything bad."

Most of us may be prompted, encouraged, inspired by others, but we must have a mind of our own if we wish to accomplish much in the world.

During my first awakening to do something more than the ordinary round of work which girls generally do, I remember raising the question, as I sat on my father's knee, as to what women might do. "Anything they wish, provided they can do it well," was his reply.

This answer settled me as to my course in life. From that day to this I have had no perplexity whether any work was right or proper for a lady to do. The question always has been, Can she do it well?



All the discussions as to woman's sphere, which have marked these later years, have not moved me. I rest just where my noble father settled my first questioning on this subject.

Let her do what she prefers, provided she can do it well. More than this, if she has a "mind to work" the way will in some manner be opened. She may be in bondage for a time, but her emancipation will come when all things are ready.

A gentleman with whom I was once conversing in reference to his bride-elect, said in answer to a question of mine concerning her health, "I don't know about her health. She has always been so bound by proprieties that I cannot judge as to her strength. Her mother tells me that she is very delicate; the family physician says she has a consumptive tendency; she assures me that she is very well, and I cannot decide. I am going to marry her and set her free, and see what she can make of herself."

He did as he said, and she has made good use of her freedom, as a dozen years have shown—has grown strong in body, strong in spirit, by the good she has done in private homes, public charities and Christian labor.

According to the "three worthies" above mentioned, let women do what they have a mind to, provided it is not bad. Let them feel that all work which "profiteth" is proper, if well done. Let husband, father and friends encourage them in the cultivation of their "best gifts." "Let him that would be greatest be servant of all," said



---

our Lord. Attainments which will help us to serve those about us are most to be desired. Among these the skill to cure the sick, or better, to keep the household in sound health stands first and foremost.

When asked if women can endure the labor of the medical profession, we are as positive as the boy of ten years who, when told that coffee and cigars were injurious, promptly replied that he was sure they were harmless, as he had used them both a long time and they had not hurt him! My observations in reference to the ability of women physicians to do their work well is much longer than that of the lad I have just spoken of. I know many young women of delicate health, embarrassed by want of means and lack of early advantages, who have grown strong by study and labor which interested and satisfied their heart's desire, and whose lives are a professional and pecuniary success. Many of them have not only been able to refund to the friends from whom they had "received aid and encouragement," but to help the indigent and care for orphans. I do not write to show that women make good doctors; I do not need to prove what so many are daily demonstrating.

The point I wish to impress on the minds of my readers is, that medical knowledge and a knowledge of hygiene will always be useful for women, whether in public or private life, whatever their estate, whether high or low, rich or poor; that this knowledge will make them better wives and mothers, missionaries and teachers—better in



any calling they may choose to follow. When their homes hold no piano, or their busy fingers find no leisure for the keys, "the harp of a thousand strings" will always be at hand, often out of tune, requiring their skill, or, better still, may be kept in tune by their judicious thoughtfulness and care.

I have heard a young wife say, when sickness came to her home, "I would give all my school accomplishments to be a good nurse, but I have not a single idea about the sick. Every new symptom frightens me, even if it be a good one, for until the doctor comes and explains, I don't know whether it is a change for the better or worse." Many a young mother, broken in health and heart, after the death of her first-born, has joined our invalid band and said, "I wish you not only to make me well, but to give me a knowledge about how to keep well—how to care for the sick. I think my dear baby might have lived had I known how to take care of it. My parents were indulgent and gave me books, schools, travel, every social advantage, but I knew nothing of the care of children, and when my baby was born, my mother could not be with me, the experienced nurse who was engaged disappointed me, the one I employed proved ignorant and inefficient, and so baby and I had a bad start. The dear little one has now gone where it will receive the care it needs, which its mother could not give, and I am left a lonely woman, a miserable invalid, taking lessons in sickness and sorrow." Then comes the bitter exclamation, "Why do our girls



---

grow up learning so much they never use, and so little of that they most need? Echo answers, "Why?" I do not know, and I cannot find any one who does. The plea is culture, discipline, development. But the best mental, moral and muscular development which I can find is the result of useful activity.

Our girls spend hours daily, for years, at the piano, and yet few of them ever make much music; many do not even try after the period of taking lessons is past, are always "out of practice," or the instrument is "out of tune." Years are given to the study of foreign languages which they never speak, read or write after their school days are over. In the higher mathematics they work and worry, but generally are deficient in ability or patience to make their personal accounts balance.

Among all those girls who go through a routine in which they have little interest, chiefly for the honor of graduation, are there not some who would do better to take a select course, such as would meet the physician's need, then add lectures on medicine, sanitary science or nursing, so as to come on to the stage of active life ready to serve the public as physicians or meet the requirements of private homes?

Do not be deterred from the duties of the physician by fear of night calls or lonely rides unattended. Whenever your services are required, a way will be provided. If your company is desired at a party, or a theater at a late hour, an escort will not be wanting. The same will be



true, according to my experience, in reference to the sick chamber. The gallantry and courtesies of life are not all expended on its follies, thank Heaven.. Among the most pleasant memories of the past forty years of active work among the sick is the kindly, thoughtful attention received from gentlemen in every rank and position. Did I need an escort at night, the arm of a poor man or the carriage of the rich has always been ready. Was the patient in peril, and I desired some one wiser than myself to give advice and share the responsibility, physicians of age and experience greater than that of mine were ready to stand with me at the bedside of the suffering one.

I remember the resolutions of certain medical societies in reference to consulting with women physicians, but I felt as certain then as now that they would not to any extent be observed. The truth is, men and women were made to help each other in Eden, and, despite the "fall," they still love to do so. When a woman, in a womanly way, does her work well, whatever it is, she will, usually, receive aid from gentlemen of refinement, if she needs it.

But it is not to prove that the way to professional labor is open to you, or to disabuse your mind of imaginary obstacles, but rather to make you see how useful is medical and sanitary knowledge, for women in all the walks of life, that I write.

Many of those who promise well for the profession turn to private practice, and we find they tend the cradle all the better for what they have learned. Students of mine, thus



---

employed, say to me, "I am daily thankful for my medical knowledge. There is no part of my youth that seems so well spent as that devoted to the study of the human body, since I have these dear little bodies to care for." Such mothers can meet the ordinary emergencies of sickness among their children much better than the physician who can come but once or twice a day. An intelligent eye is required to watch the wants of these little ones, that cannot detail their symptoms. In case of severe illness, they will require counsel, for that is always best when those we love intensely are concerned, as feeling is likely to bias judgment. Beside this, the wisdom which can come only from experience in practice is desirable.

With such counsel, and the care which an educated mother can give, the chances for life and health are tenfold greater than when loving ignorance prevails. Links, bright and strong, are formed in times of sickness, between the mother and invalid, when she is the safe counsellor, the wise and tender "care-taker." It is an old story that missionaries find their medical knowledge a great help to reach the hearts of the heathen—that the natives listen to the spiritual truths Christians present, because from them they have received physical relief.

The mother loses much when husband and children, for lack of knowledge on her part, must turn to stranger-hands for care in sickness. I do not mean that all women can make good doctors or good nurses. There is a "diversity of gifts." But I do mean that a wise head



---

and a warm heart will find many sweet ways of relieving the sick in her own family which a strange hand can never devise. There is no way in which a family can be well cared for unless the mother knows how, and will "see to things," as my own dear mother used to say.

It is not uncommon to find cases of serious chronic diseases among the daughters of our best physicians. Are the fathers to blame? I trow not, unless it was in not finding a better mother for their children. While they are engrossed with public duties, their families may suffer for want of sensible personal supervision. I remember a young woman of marked intelligence and ability, the daughter of one of the best physicians in Central New York, who was a confirmed invalid from indigestion and constipation, the result of rich food, over-eating and sedentary habits from childhood. When I expressed my surprise that the daughter of so eminent a physician, and one, too, who had inherited so excellent a constitution, should be in such a bad condition, she replied, "My father was busy with his patients; he left his children to the care of mother, and she thought that if her girls were first in the class, excelled in music, skilled with the needle, they were in the right way, even if they sat up until midnight, and ate mince pie just before going to bed. As for our bodily functions, she gave no attention them. She seemed to have no sense of responsibility beyond her desire that we should be genteel young ladies."

We are glad to say that most doctors have a better



---

helpmate in home practice than the one just alluded to. The wife of a physician, even if she had no opportunity for gaining medical information, will soon become intelligent if he be "apt to teach," and she has a desire to learn. A loving tutor will soon lead her to a knowledge of those lessons of hygiene, to which she will render cheerful observance. But the great trouble is that too many of our young women, between fashionable follies and fiction reading, have little time and less taste for more serious pursuits. I remember a physician's wife who, when questioned in reference to the care of the sick, always replied, "I don't know, but my husband does." It is pleasant to feel that one's husband knows, and it is also convenient to know some things "one's own self."

The "art of healing" must always be a useful one for women, whatever their age and condition, until they are transferred to the land where "the inhabitants never say, 'I am sick.'"



## XVIII.

### A Letter to Husbands.

GENTLEMEN: A Member of Congress who had read some of my "Letters to Ladies," said in a conversation concerning them, "You ought to write a letter to husbands." I replied that I had not thought my mission to be in that direction; that hitherto my tongue and pen had been only for my own sex. He pressed the point, and I said, "Well, what would you have me say?" "Tell them," he said, "as soon as they have their business well in hand, to make over some property to the wife, and not wait till embarrassment comes, and then try to save something from the wreck by conveying it to her. Let there be no cheating of creditors in that way, but when a husband really has property unencumbered, and no one will be wronged thereby, he should share generously with his wife. In days of prosperity it will give her added pleasure, and if adversity comes there will be something for the family 'to fall back upon.'" He spoke earnestly, feelingly.

Soon after, I related this conversation to my friend, the late Hon. Schuyler Colfax, and he said, "I know the gentleman well; he spoke from his own painful experience.



Once he was rich, and held all his property in his own hands. Now it is all gone, and he feels keenly his changed condition on account of his wife and children, toward whom he is most tender in his attachment."

Experience keeps a dear school, and we would like the "family man" to be taught in one less expensive, if possible. Do not wait until the cloud is gathering darkly over your financial sky before you endow your wife with a share of your worldly goods, for she can hardly feel them her own when her husband's creditors are demanding them to settle some old account. Make your appropriation in fair weather, when the property is honestly your own. Of course you say, "If I keep it in my own hands I can make money faster." Very likely; but you may lose faster, and more of it, as many have found to their sorrow.

The wife should be a helpmate, a responsible partner. A common income, a common purse, if you please; but that purse should not always be in the pants pocket, and the wife compelled to ask for every quarter, and, worse still, when she gets a dollar tell how it is to be spent. The truly happy wife loves to show her purchases, tell what she paid, and receive a look of husbandly approval, which she prizes more than what she has bought.

A young man of moderate means married a noble wife without money, and they began housekeeping in a snug, comfortable way. He kindly spared her the embarrassment of asking him for money by keeping a deposit in the



bank to her credit, from which she could draw at will without a word from him, and thus meet her family and personal expenses. I admired the delicacy with which he put a sensitive nature at ease on money matters. But there is many a charming bride and many a generous husband who never have money in bank. Well then, let the wife share in the expenditure of the spare funds, and help to decide how they can best be used. Do not cover from her the facts of your own liabilities, and thus encourage her to spend more than you can afford. Have all things in common, your debts and your credits, your joys and your sorrows. Many a woman draws too heavily on her husband's purse because she does not know how near it is to a collapse. Many another feels aggrieved because she so seldom has a greenback, when she often sees a roll of them in her husband's hand, not dreaming that they are due, perchance overdue, and will disappear the next day. In the intimate relations of wedded life, if each is to understand the other, plans, profits and losses must be shared. Out of this common part happiness and helpfulness will surely come.

A genial husband, who began life without means, and came in due time to a comfortable competence, once said that he had consulted with his wife all the way along, from the buying of a jack-knife for his boy to the building of a water cure establishment. This was wisdom.

Husbands, in business affairs, often treat their so-called better halves with as little respect and confidence as did



the inflated captain of a militia company in a small New England town. He was practicing for the June training, in the back yard, near the out-door cellar way, the door of which was open. His wife, sole spectator, seeing him near the edge, warned him of his danger. The captain responded sternly: "Woman, what do you know about war?" Soon after, he made a retreat backward to the bottom of the stairs, but not in a military manner!

That women do not well understand business matters is often true; but if they were "confidential partners" they would learn much that it would be well for them to know. Beside this, their quick intuition, their moral sense, would many times be of real service. To share a husband's thoughts, hopes and plans is a diversion from domestic details which helps her better to bear the latter.

Just here let me say that if the "man of a family" lends now and then a hand in woman's work he will better appreciate the services of both mistress and maid. Helping on a washing-day, watching of a night with a sick child, tending a teething baby, is especially instructive. A young doctor, after helping care for his first baby, in the absence of a nurse, said, "I have now learned what is the matter with many young mothers. I have often wondered why they begin to fade so soon, get a stoop, a pain between the shoulders. Baby tending in my case produced just such symptoms." This was an important item which he had not learned from medical books and lectures. We understand a thing when we stand under it, and



that is especially true of "woman's work, which is never done."

A friend on a Southern plantation said, "Dick works harder than any one else on the place." "How is that," was the inquiry, "he has no regular work?" "That is the truth," she said, "he is not a field hand or a house servant; but he does everything that the others do not do." The faithful mother of a family is like Dick on the plantation: the larger the home, the greater the number of helpers, the more bits and ends there are for her to look after. Let husbands be lenient in reference to mishaps, for this "seeing to things," as it is called, means more than at first appears.

Attention to details often causes weariness, hence to share the husband's thoughts, plans and hopes is a grateful change, and in his perplexities the wife forgets for a time her own. Many a generous husband is more of a tyrant toward his wife than he dreams. He will surprise her with gifts, showy and expensive, but not needed; but when asked to improve the home to suit her taste or convenience he assumes an antagonistic manner, airs his superior wisdom by asserting that the change can't be made, and it would be of no use if it could, or that he cannot afford such a piece of extravagance. All this before the weak little woman has had time to detail all her plans in full. Being of a gentle nature, she shrinks from being thus silenced, and he is soon "monarch of all he surveys," in-doors and out, and she is still sweet, with a tinge of



sadness. Other natures, under this "reign of terror," grow sharp, sour, and on the sly buy things "unbeknown" to their husbands, being afterward in a half-ashamed, half-defiant mood.

When the wife asks for what at first seems impracticable, listen even then with deference, and suggest a better way if you can; but with evident interest meet her real wishes. Let there be "free speech" on both sides, with a kindly bearing. The true wife is satisfied when she knows her husband desires to accede to her plans; after that it matters little whether he can or not.

I have seen "hen-pecked husbands," and feel quite as sorry for them as for the wife that is overborne by conjugal authority; but as I am not writing for wives now, I must pass by those thus oppressed.

The genuine, congenial companionship which should exist in wedded life appears to be marred when the husband says, "I am fond of my wife, but I would not allow her to do thus or so." Rather let him say, "I respect my wife, but I should be sorry to have her do thus," etc., when a difference of opinion occurs. Do not begin your married life with foolish petting and unwise indulgence which you cannot afford, and thus encourage her to be an overgrown child, who has to be governed when her whims have outgrown your patience or your purse. The world has plenty of Doras like the one created by Dickens, but let no man promote their growth in his own household in the person of a wife or daughters. Men like pets; but when perplex-



ity comes, or business presses heavily, they are apt to shake them off rudely, without due explanation, and then come bitter heartaches.

When you observe a cloud gathering over the once happy face, do not ask, What is the matter? if you, too, feel cross and perplexed. But as soon as you are in the sunshine, if she is still in the shadow, invite her confidence by a kindly inquiry as to the cause. Sharing with you the trouble will help to cure or endure it. Should you chance to be unwittingly the source of sorrow, a word of apology, an explanation, will comfort her and ennoble you. Thus will you come to understand each other better. When the wife looks weary and worried do not say to yourself, It is no fault of mine; I am a "good provider," and in your heart hold her aloof. Remember that women, as a rule, need to talk over their trials more than men do. "He" takes to his pipe, his cigar, his glass, or to grim silence when vexed or perplexed. "She" wants a sympathetic word, and if she gets this from a genial husband she is usually safe from injudicious counsel and unwise gossip. Many a wedded pair become widely estranged because their little troubles have not been cured by mutual confidence, but have been shared with their neighbors. If you must unburden to some one beside your "bosom companion," let it be either to your minister, your doctor or your lawyer; they are supposed to be safe confidants and wise counselors, whose business it is to show you the best way to the paths of peace.



---

As the true wife will do all in her power to correct or cover her husband's faults, however grave they may be, so the true husband will never pass his wife's foibles from lip to lip, even in a playful manner. If he wants them corrected, let him say so to her when they are both in their best mood.

We hear much of "women's influence in the house." Men, too, have their power here for good or for evil, and have their duties to do in order to "make home happy."

It was your "best side" which won your wife; cultivate that side of your nature, and ever keep it before her as much as possible. You, too, saw her "better side" in your early enthusiasm, and when you are so unfortunate as to get a glimpse of her less lovely traits, do not dwell on this transient eclipse. Every character of depth and variety will develop and display new qualities, or at least new peculiarities, under differing circumstances, so we need to forgive anew, live anew day by day. The Yankee school-marm admired the bereaved New England deacon, in whose family she boarded during the summer school; but after being married to him for a few years she said: "I thought I knew the deacon beforehand, but I find one must summer and winter with a man before one finds out exactly what he is."

Dr. Harriet K. Hunt, of Boston, said to me once, when speaking of women's legal disabilities, "I have some hard things to say to men, and am waiting for my gray hairs to bear me out in saying them." Well, I do not want to say



“hard things” to the “men folks,” though it does seem as if some of them deserve it; but I have taken the liberty which years may give, to write suggestively in reference to seemingly small matters which have much to do with the peace and prosperity of the family. As medical mother to many women in sickness and sorrow, I have often caught a glimpse of conjugal unrest, which appeared to be a serious source of invalidism, even when the husband intended to be faithful and considerate.

The last forty-five years of my life have been devoted chiefly to women, and among them I have seen many noble specimens who seemed to me to receive too little respect and confidence from their life-partners, and yet too dignified and self-contained to show they felt the lack. Beside these, many another who was, indeed, the “weaker vessel,” on whom “more abundant honor” and affection was bestowed than she appeared to deserve.

In the latter course a man grows more manly by condescension; while the husband who “lords it” over his “noble lady” grows more selfish, imperious and narrow year by year.

I fear the title of this paper will repel the readers for whom it is intended. Men do not like to be lectured, even in print; but the wives will be curious as to the husband’s duties, and so will be taken by the title. Should they be prompted thereby to try to remodel their “family man” matters with them may be worse than ever. Men do not like to be told by their wives what they ought “to be, to



---

do or to suffer." This is even worse than being "taken to task by the mother-in-law;" hence those women who are so unfortunate as to read this paper must be "wise as serpents and harmless as doves" in reference to hints herein contained.



## XIX.

### Health Hints for Old People.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: I seem, even now, to see that sunny front corner room, on the first floor, with its bright blazing fire, brass andirons and white marble hearth, in which my grandmother sat in her easy chair, her hair dressed in the Martha Washington style, wearing a white cap with full border. I still hear the click of her knitting needles, and see the warm sock growing under her busy fingers. She was interested in all that pertained to our large family and farm life, and I used to wonder why she would so frequently slip away from us all to her own quiet, sunny corner, where no one was permitted to intrude.

I could not understand it *then*, but I do *now*. Human experience repeats itself as generations pass onward. "When the almond tree begins to flourish, and the grasshopper is a burden," then little things worry us, and we "become tired sooner than we used to." We cannot endure or enjoy things as long as we once did. We need more frequent periods of rest. We all recognize this fact in reference to the aged, but are slow to realize when we



---

belong to that class. We may know that we are growing old, but don't know when we get there, and our friends don't want to remind us of the fact, so we continue unconscious of it until some day the conductor of the crowded car says, "Move up, and give this old lady a seat." Surprised at the appellation, we say to ourselves, "Can he mean me?"

Nature is gentle in her changes, and the failure of our earthly tabernacle comes on so slowly that we scarcely realize that the wear and tear of years is telling on us, and we need to "favor ourselves." Those who wish to attain "threescore years and ten" comfortably, should lessen their labor before they reach twoscore and ten. We may do good work, probably our best by head or hand, long after that period, but we ought not to work so hard or so long. The recuperative force of the system is lessening and we need more time for rest, as overwork, whether manual or mental, is more likely to leave serious consequences.

When we are ripened by age and experience, and are ready to do our best, we must lighten our load or supplement our strength by that of others.

The successful man of business too often adds farm to farm, mill to mill, store to store, and when "a little past his prime" leaves his large estate to inexperienced hands; if he had taken more rest he might have lived to guide those needing his wisdom to manage well what he had accumulated. Faithful wives, fond mothers, fine house-



keepers frequently hold on to all their work too long, and die prematurely or break down before they should. By an earlier division of labors and cares with their growing daughters, and taking to themselves more leisure, their last quarter of a century might have been useful and pleasurable.

I was speaking to a lady of seventy, a few days ago, of her good health and cheerful spirit, and she said, "While I have always led a very active life, I have taken rest from two to four p. m. every day since the age of forty-five. I think it is this which has enabled me to hold out so long and so well, with such good health."

Physicians find it more difficult than any other class to order their lives in accordance with their needs after years begin to diminish their physical vigor. Old doctors, if they are good ones, are likely to be in great demand, and their patients are unwilling to accept a substitute.

I remember my father used to say that people were quite ready to trust their souls to the guidance of a young minister, but they preferred a man of age and experience to care for their bodies. But despite the imperiousness of invalids, and the over anxiety of friends, the good old family doctor should step aside and give the younger physicians a chance to try their skill, while he rests and reserves his best energies for counsel and aid in cases of emergency. By this course he will be able to serve in his profession longer and be more useful to his patients.

With advancing years there is less power to resist the



---

effects of cold, and a greater liability to congestion of internal organs, which may prove serious. Every winter, we note, many persons past fifty die of pneumonia. Many more are left with chronic troubles, the result of imperfect superficial circulation during cold weather.

In place of needed rest, many who have hitherto been temperate, when they feel their natural force abating, take to stimulants. Men of correct habits at forty sometimes become inebriates before sixty. Women occasionally do the same, but more often use tea and coffee to excess, become nervous and wakeful, and then resort to some of the various preparations of morphine to induce sleep. Others take too little food and too little rest, relying upon tonics, yet in spite of them become irritable and wonder why they are not well and happy, as they were in younger years.

The infirmities incident to advancing age are retarded in their progress more surely by such changes in diet as the symptoms require, by baths, by freedom from excitement, by moderate exercise in the open air, rather than by much medication.

With less nervous power and a slower digestion, we need more of lean meat, oysters, eggs, soups, beef tea, and less of vegetables, puddings and pastry. The inactivity of the skin and liver, the congestion of mucous surfaces may be relieved by baths and warm fomentations, which are better for those whose vigor of system is failing than more active remedies.



More than all, the aged need to cultivate a contented spirit and a cheerful acceptance of the fact that this body must fail, and best of all that there is for them a new and better body, the spiritual body of which Paul spoke, which can never know weariness or pain.

By cultivating this frame of mind, undue prominence will not be given to physical infirmities, which have such a depressing influence on the family circle.

Years dim the eye, dull the ear, lessen the power to apprehend; but it is not wise to speak of limitations, save when necessary, for repetitions of this sort soon weary others.

Supersensitive nerves in old people, added to an imperious nature, often causes undue restraint to be placed on children, thus debarring them from healthful amusement. A little boy once said he did not want to go to Heaven. When his mother asked him why, he replied, "Because grandpa has gone there, and will be cross and say, 'Whew! whew! What are all these boys here for?'"

In contrast, a little girl once inquired if her grandfather was in the winter of life. When answered in the affirmative, she said, "Well, he is like some winter days when the sun shines brightly on the clear white snow; he is not like a cold, blustering winter day."

Advice may be given to younger members of the family, but we should not frown upon their reasonable tastes or plans. Every generation has its wishes and ways, which may be better, may be worse, than those of the



---

past; but if those in middle life be not allowed to try their experiments they feel defrauded of their rights.

We do not like to think of any one as having outlived his or her own usefulness, but it does seem as if the only service of some is for the discipline of those who live with them. Those having the care of such need to heed the injunction of the Apostle when he said, "Comfort the feeble minded, support the weak, be patient toward all." Many seem to come to dependence prematurely by turning aside from active service. Because they cannot do as they once did they conclude it is best to give up their work and be taken care of. To maintain a healthful condition of mind and body, some industry in which the individual is interested is important. To find this for the aged and infirm is more difficult in those families who keep a variety of helpers than in the early New England homes where there was always light labor for both old and young.

When there are no simple duties then there is more need that diversions be planned for them as far as possible. Let those in middle life share, as far as may be, their plans, and also their interests, their reading; share with them the neighborhood news, etc., that they may not feel that they belong so far back in the past generation as to have no part in the present one.

When thus left to themselves they dwell too much on their sorrows and infirmities, and become a cold winter cloud instead of warm winter sunshine.

Many a young wife has come to me depressed in spirit,



broken in health, because of the shadow over her home caused by the mother-in-law, and, I am sorry to say, by her own mother. The sad story runs something like this: Grandma thinks we are to blame; she is unhappy, complains of the children, criticises the young folks. If we have company, she is disturbed, and hence we have no cheerful home life.

When the aged do their best not to be burdensome they must necessarily still be some tax on those about them.

To raise the voice and repeat for the dull ears, to see for the dim eyes, to elaborate for the tardy apprehension, to steady the uncertain steps, becomes often a great burden for those in the full strength of middle life. To these we must add the failure of memory, which is usually the most embarrassing to both parties. But if the quality of spirit be good the way is made comparatively easy.

John Quincy Adams, when growing old, said, in speaking of the journey of life, he wished he could sleep in the carriage the rest of the way. Many another has felt the same, but the good Father knows when life's lesson is complete, and till then let us learn patiently to bear it.

Let us cultivate the habit of looking toward the sunset of life in hope of a brighter morning. Paul said, "I keep my body under," which a little boy in Sunday school said meant to keep the soul on top. The weight of years is greatly lessened by keeping the soul on top.

Ere we attain threescore years and ten, we shall have experienced all the indications of physical decline so aptly



described in the twelve chapters of Ecclesiastes. But our spiritual growth need not be arrested thus early, "Thanks be to Him who giveth us the victory."

Kind Nature decorates the edifice ruined by years, with a graceful vine, thus giving it a beauty peculiarly its own. In like manner we sometimes see in the aged characteristics quaint, but charming, indicating that the "Comforter has come," granting them grace, mercy and peace.









## THE GLEASON SANITARIUM

---

**T**HIS HOME FOR INVALIDS was established in 1852, by the author of this book and her husband, and has been one of the leading health resorts of the country for over forty years.

The Situation is High and Picturesque—

Water of the Purest from Mountain Springs—

Table First-Class in All Respects.

All modern improvements—Elevator—Gas—Electric Bells—Steam Heat—All forms of Hot and Cold Water Baths—Turkish—Russian—Roman and Electric Baths—Massage, Swedish Movements—Women under the care of women of life-long experience in diseases peculiar to the sex. A cheerful home for rest and recreation for tired and wornout people.

For descriptive pamphlet, address

FACULTY :

DR. RACHEL B. GLEASON  
DR. ADELE A. GLEASON  
DR. S. O. GLEASON

**E. B. GLEASON, Manager,**  
**ELMIRA, NEW YORK.**



















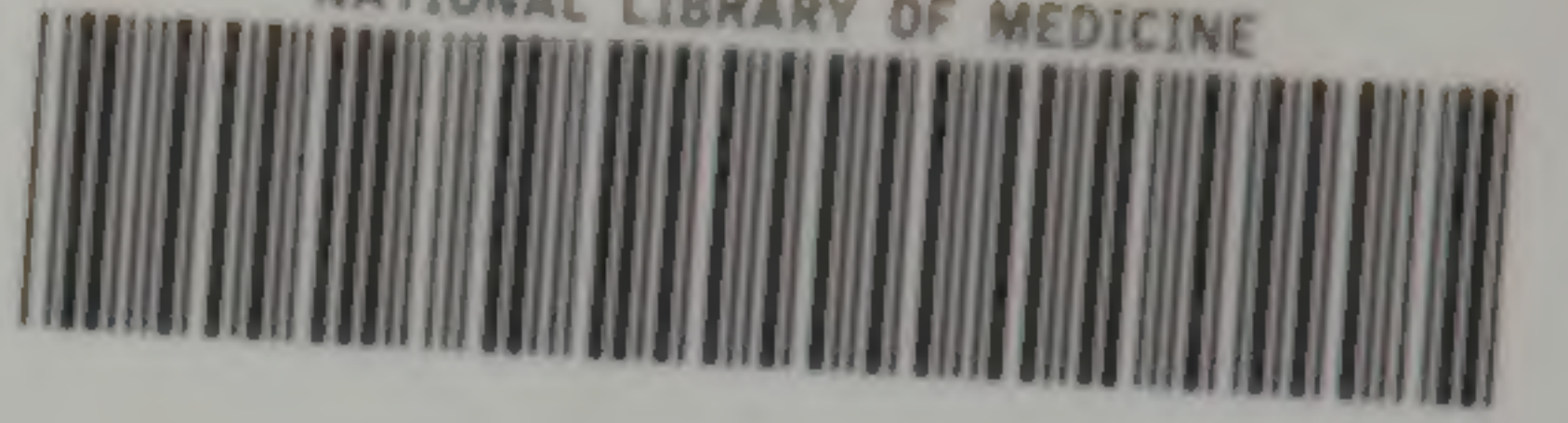








NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MEDICINE



NLM 00555638 5